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# THE TIMES

No. 65,217

FRIDAY MARCH 17 1995

Call to reverse Law Lords' decision

## Banks facing £1bn bill for redundancy

By Neil Bennett, Deputy Business Editor

MORE than half a million employees from 20,000 failed businesses stand to gain up to £1 billion in total after a decision by the Law Lords yesterday that will force company receivers to make full redundancy payments to anyone they laid off in the past eight years.

The decision shocked the accountancy and banking worlds and prompted calls for Michael Heseltine, the President of the Board of Trade, to introduce retrospective legislation to prevent a legal free-for-all. However, the chances of such a move appeared last night to be slim.

The action was started four years ago by Captain Dave Wilmut, an airline pilot with Paramount Airways, who turned to his local solicitors when he was laid off by his firm's administrators without the holiday pay to which he thought he was entitled. Since then it has grown into an legal action that could cost the high street banks hundreds of millions of pounds in irrecoverable loans.

The decision opens the way for employees and directors from many well-known companies that failed during the recession to sue the receivers for redundancy payments. They include Ferranti, Leyland DAF, Maxwell Communication Corporation and Polly Peck.

The upsurge has been caused by bad drafting in two clauses of the Insolvency Act 1986, which were introduced at the last minute. These, the Law Lords have decided, make receivers and administrators responsible for the contracts of employees in the companies they take over once two weeks have passed. In the past, receivers had believed they were able to lay off staff and give them no more than their statutory redundancy entitlement, which is funded by the Department of Employment.

When the Court of Appeal first decided that administrators and receivers were responsible a year ago, the Government rushed through a law to close the loophole. But any employee of a company

### MoD flop pays out £400,000

Two officials hired on a three-year Ministry of Defence contract to sell 70,000 married quarters are to receive nearly £400,000 in redundancy pay. The scheme collapsed after only a few months.

Derek Fatchett, Labour defence spokesman, denounced the "massive pay-off" as another example of MoD waste and incompetence.

The Ministry's plan, involving a private housing trust, was seen as a way of meeting, at a stroke, Treasury demands for £500 million savings in 1995.

that failed between 1986 and early 1994 is still eligible to claim redundancy money.

Yesterday Captain Wilmut, now a senior pilot with Airtours, said he originally had no idea what effect his court action might eventually have. "I have had nine airlines go broke on me and I just felt there was something wrong when an administrator could not accept responsibility for my contract."

He said that the receivers Spicer & Oppenheim had asked him to work on for six months after Paramount Airways failed, and laid him off only when hopes of a rescue deal fell apart. "They came in and took all over us."

With two colleagues who had taken out legal insurance he sued for holiday and redundancy pay. Yesterday he said that he did not expect to see the money. "It is a victory, but these people are so powerful that they will try to bring in a retrospective change in the law to prevent it. They won't take all this sitting down."

Jan Bradbery, the president of the Society of Practitioners of Insolvency, said that he was calling for an early meeting with Mr Heseltine to demand retrospective legislation. He called the decision a penalty for saving jobs and said that the main winners from the

decision would be the directors of failed companies who could sue to recover redundancy payments they had awarded themselves in their contracts.

"In retrospect, the answer would have been for the receivers to shut the doors on companies like Swan Hunter and Leyland DAF on day one, with the catastrophic effect that would have had on employment," Mr Bradbery said.

The main losers from the decision will be the creditors of the failed companies, since the claims of former employees will rank above all others. The hardest hit will be the high street banks who will have to wait years longer to recover any of their loans and will receive far less as a result.

The Law Lords largely upheld the decision of the Appeal Court a year ago. But Lord Browne-Wilkinson said at one point that the Appeal Court's reading of the ambiguous legislation produced "an absurd result which cannot reflect the intention of Parliament." As a result he decided that receivers should not be liable for other employee benefits, such as paid holidays.

When it reached the Lords the Paramount Airways action was linked to similar cases from Leyland DAF and Ferranti. At Leyland DAF 957 employees lost their jobs in 1993 after the firm went into receivership. They can all now sue the receivers to recover redundancy pay. Arthur Andersen, Leyland DAF's receiver, said last night that it had set aside enough money to meet any claims. At Ferranti, 229 employees are now eligible to take action.

The accountancy profession would appear to have little chance of persuading the Government to introduce retrospective legislation. When it was suggested last year the Government said such a move would be unconstitutional and both Houses of Parliament threw out amendments to the emergency Insolvency Act in 1994 that would have made the law retrospective.

Business News, page 21



Norman Williamson on Master Oats: "One winner would have made me happy, but two..."

## Cup triumph for Master Oats

By Richard Evans, Racing Correspondent

MASTER OATS, the 100-30 favourite, won the Cheltenham Gold Cup yesterday to complete a historic big race double for Kim Bailey and Norman Williamson, the horse's trainer and jockey.

The pair won the Champion Hurdle on Tuesday night at Alderbrook, and the last time a trainer and jockey won the two most important Cheltenham Festival races was in 1950, when Hatton's Grace and Cottage Rake, trained by Vincent O'Brien and ridden by Aubrey Brazzosa, did it for the second successive year.

Bailey, 41, is the first trainer since Peter Easterby in 1981 to win both the Champion Hurdle and Gold Cup in the same

year. He backed Alderbrook at 50-1 and Master Oats at 50-1 and 40-1. No jockey has completed the double since Fred Winter in 1961.

Bailey, based at Upper Lambourn, said: "I felt if we got to Thursday night without a winner you would see me hanging from the top of the stands. Everybody was saying we hadn't trained a Festival winner. Alderbrook and Master Oats came with every chance in the world, and have gone and done it."

O'Brien, the most successful trainer since the War, has been an idol of Bailey for years and witnessed the achievement. Bailey said: "I went round Ballydoyle [O'Brien's yard] 18 years ago when I first started training, and it was like walking into heaven going through the gates."

Williamson, who won the Ritz Club Trophy awarded to the leading jockey at the Festival, added: "I said last week that if I had one winner I'd go home happy, but to win two big races and have four winners is great."

Master Oats is now 4-1 for the Grand National at Aintree next month, a race Bailey won in 1990 with Mr Frisk. No horse has won the Cheltenham Gold Cup and Grand National in the same year since Golden Miller in 1934.

Racing, pages 36-37

## Major fights to bring back the elusive feel-good factor

By Philip Webster and Nicholas Wood

JOHN MAJOR signalled his determination yesterday to fight off any challenge to his leadership as he led a cabinet effort to deflect the impact of Kenneth Clarke's warning that the "feel-good" factor's return is still a long way off.

Amid signs that Tory morale is again on the slide, the Prime Minister also delivered a withering putdown to Lord McAlpine of West Green, the former Conservative Party treasurer, who became the first senior Tory to suggest openly that the party might benefit from losing the next election.

Countering Mr Clarke's downbeat assessment of the outlook for living standards, Mr Major said that Britain was witnessing the "most sustained recovery on the most secure basis that this country has seen for many years."

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, exploited the latest Tory rift to claim that the Chancellor had confirmed "that unless you are one of the favoured few at the top, you are worse off under the Tories."

Some leading Conservatives are predicting that the air of sullen resignation on the back benches could descend into panic if the opinion polls are borne out and the party is "thrashed" in the council elections in May. They believe that Mr Major could then come under intense pressure to make way for a new leader such as Michael Heseltine, Michael Portillo or Mr Clarke.

The Prime Minister was in defiant mood in the Commons as Labour's Dennis Skinner goaded him with the warning that his colleagues planned to kick him out "like a dog in the night". Mr Major told the House that he was no stranger to such speculation, had ridden it out in the past and would do so again.

As the fresh burst of leadership speculation raged, Mr Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, put himself at the head of efforts to calm increasing Tory anxieties about their seemingly dire election prospects. He also delivered oblique reminders that despite his heart attack and his 62 years, he still regarded himself as a potent political force. "We are not exhausted and I don't feel in any way haunted," he told BBC radio.

He sidestepped questions about his leadership ambitions, declining explicitly to rule out standing against Mr Major. He rejected the possibility that Tory MPs might offer him the crown and denied that they were all talking about a contest. "I

have made it absolutely clear that they are not going to... They aren't all talking about it. Let's be realistic. "The thing that matters is to persuade people just what wonderful opportunities are coming through. We have got to believe in ourselves and go for it," he told Channel 4.

Mr Major implied in the Commons that Lord McAlpine's remarks, in which he said the Prime Minister had "stuffed up the Conservative Party", were connected with the publication of a book. He declared to gasps from the Tory benches: "I understand that he is promoting a book which is a work of fiction."

Lord McAlpine, a long-standing member of Baroness Thatcher's inner circle and her host in Spain over the new year holiday, found little

Continued on page 2, col 5

### £6bn rescue for Crédit Lyonnais

The French Government is today expected to announce a bail-out plan for Crédit Lyonnais, France's biggest bank, which has a £6 billion hole in its accounts. The scheme will cost £100 for each man, woman and child in the country.

## Clinton greets Adams at lunch

From Martin Fletcher in Washington

GERRY ADAMS yesterday received the ultimate stamp of approval when President Clinton shook his hand and chatted to him, despite Britain's vigorous objection to the Sinn Féin leader's fund-raising American visit.

Mr Adams finally came face to face with Mr Clinton at a St Patrick's Day lunch on Capitol Hill hosted by Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House. The two sat at different tables 15ft apart. Mr Adams sandwiched between two Republican congressmen, Tom DeLay, the Republican House Whip, and Peter King, a prominent Irish-American.

After reporters and cameramen were escorted out of the ornate room, Mr Clinton went around greeting the 75 other guests, who burst into applause when he shook Mr Adams's hand. Their encounter was described as very friendly by Mr King, who slipped out of the lunch to spread word of the meeting.

At one point during their conversation, Mr Clinton put his fist in the air and said: "This is going to work." Mr Adams said their four or five

minutes' conversation was cordial and positive. He commended Mr Clinton for his active engagement in the peace process and thanked him for his efforts.

Mr Adams, who said Mr Clinton did not raise the issue of the IRA decommissioning its arsenal, also had what he described as a "cordial" conversation with Mr Gingrich. Citing his contacts with America's top politicians, the Sinn Féin leader later appealed to John Major to lift the Government's ban on ministerial-level meetings with Sinn Féin.

Tonight Mr Adams will be Mr Clinton's guest at a White House St Patrick's Day reception. The Speaker's traditional lunch was held a day before St Patrick's Day so Congressmen could return to their districts for the weekend. The guests included John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, John Hume, leader of the SDLP, and John Alderdice, leader of Northern Ireland's Non-Sectarian Alliance Party.

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### TOMORROW IN THE TIMES



**MAGAZINE**  
Free tickets to the Easter film — 101 Dalmatians  
**WEEKEND**  
Twenty ways to tell if you are middle-aged

**CAR 95**  
The best way to stop your car being stolen  
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Your 7-day TV and radio guide  
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## Grandson succeeds clan chief Lovat

By Gillian Bowditch, Scotland Correspondent

AN 18-YEAR-OLD pupil at Harrow will become Chief of the Clan Fraser when he comes of age, after his grandfather Lord Lovat, a distinguished war hero, died at his home yesterday. He was 83.

Simon Christopher Joseph Fraser, Chief of the Clan Fraser of Lovat and head of one of Scotland's leading Catholic families, died peacefully in his sleep just before lunchtime. His wife Rosamond was at his side.

It was the third death to strike the family in the past year. Simon, Master of Lovat and Lord Lovat's heir, died of a heart attack while drag-hunting at the family seat in Inverness-shire. Another of Lord Lovat's sons, Andrew, was gored to death by a buffalo while on safari in Kenya a few weeks earlier.

Lord Lovat's grandson, Simon, who is in his final year at Harrow, will inherit the estate and the title in three years.

Lord Lovat, aware that the male members of the Fraser family often suffered from weak hearts, had handed over the family estates to his son Simon when he was 25. But it was Simon who had inherited

the weak heart and his death left the family in a financial crisis, with debts of £7.4 million, including £990,000 to Lloyd's and £2.7 million to the Inland Revenue.

Lord Lovat, a much-decorated war hero, earned a place in history by leading one of the first Commando units ashore on D-Day in a kilt of Fraser tartan and accompanied by his personal piper. Churchill called him "the mildest-mannered man that ever scuttled a ship or cut a throat".

Obituary, page 19



Simon Fraser: will take title when he turns 21

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**MATTHEW PARRIS**  
POLITICAL SKETCH

## Busy Mr Major engages callers on crossed line

For some time now the Prime Minister has been in the sands of Palestine, and incommunicado. Not even the President of the United States, it seems, has been able to get through.

Yesterday Mr Major returned to the Commons for Prime Minister's Questions, and proved that he does not have to be in the Gaza Strip to be difficult to reach. There he was, as large as life and right in front of us. And still nobody could get through.

*Trring, trring.* It was David Shaw (C, Dover) on the line, on Question 1. There's a slight "ttrr" on, nobody at home? quality about Mr Shaw at the best of times, but he's all too capable of making a loud noise of a British sort. Mr Major pinned back his ears. Down the line from Dover came a manic series of accusations about Labour-led local government. The implication was that Labour councillors were corrupt.

For this call, Mr Major was frankly not available. He did respond, but not to the point Shaw was trying to make. Muttering something about Labour incompetence, and the District Auditor's functions, the PM left Shaw hanging on in vain.

*Trring, trring.* It was that nice Mr Blair. Unfortunately he got Mr Major's answering machine. Blair left a message about Tory tax increases, but heard only some recorded voice-mail from the Government about "sustained economic recovery". *Trring, trring.* Blair tried again.

Maybe this time he would reach the PM? The Opposition leader launched into an excited complaint about taxation and "why people do feel so angry".

The PM was indeed in. But he appeared to have a crossed line. Instead of answering Blair, he fired off an angry complaint of his own about Labour's policies, or lack of them.

*Click, crackle...* Now it was Blair's turn not to be in. From Labour's end of the line came a pre-recorded soundbite: "since he asks me the question, let me tell him what is wrong". Major had indeed asked him the question, but not that question. And now Major switched his own machine back on. After the bleep came a recorded message from the PM about the minimum wage and social chapter. Both men sat down. Neither had got through.

*Trring, trring.* It was Paddy Ashdown. Both Mr Major kicked himself for failing to screen out this call. Ashdown was ready with an awkward enquiry about a 36 per cent increase in government entertainment — and this, he said, from a Government which claimed it couldn't pay teachers.

What does one do when it's too late to hang up? Major had used up all his recorded messages. So he pretended he couldn't hear. The PM didn't actually say "sorry, Paddy, but it's a very faint line", he simply ignored the question about official hospitality and let loose a rant about Mr Ashdown's county council. Operator Boothroyd never allows the Liberal Democrat leader two calls. Fuming, Paddy replaced the receiver.

Next came the fresh-faced and fluffy-tailed David Faber (C, Westbury). *Trring, trring.* "Hello," said Mr Major — or, rather, "I refer my hon friend to the answer I gave some moments ago."

"Will you join me," Faber asked the prime-ministerial voice at the other end of the line. "In congratulating Chelsea Football Club" for their recent victory over Bruges at a good-natured match? All at once, the line was clear, the answering machine off, and Mr Major was at home and happy to take the call.

## MoD pays £400,000 after homes project fails

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

NEARLY £400,000 is to be paid in redundancy money to two officials brought in on a three-year contract by the Ministry of Defence to devise a scheme, aborted after a few months, for selling 70,000 service married quarters.

Derek Fatchett, a Labour defence spokesman, last night denounced the pay-offs as another example of Defence Ministry "waste and incompetence".

The Defence Ministry's plan had been to set up a private housing trust that would have bought the MoD married quarters and leased them back, raising £500 million. It was proposed as a way of meeting, at a stroke, Treasury demands for savings of £500 million this year.

Three outsiders, Michael Robinson, former chief executive of Bristol City Council, Mark Taylor from the building industry, and Colin James, a housing expert, were contracted to run the trust.

However, the trust had to be wound up after the Treasury ruled it could not be properly classed as a private-sector body and would therefore be barred from receiving private-sector capital, upon which its success depended.

Mr Robinson, who was on a three-year contract totalling £240,000 plus option bonuses of £60,000, is now to be made redundant from March 31 after working for the Defence

Ministry for about a year. He will receive £200,000 in compensation, Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, said in a written Commons answer last night. Mr Taylor, who was the finance director of the doomed trust, will be paid £170,000.

Mr James will stay, as the chief executive of a new housing executive that was formed after the collapse of the housing trust. The executive will manage all the married quarters on a tri-service basis but the original plan to sell the properties and raise £500 million has had to be shelved.

The MoD said that Mr James would be paid £75,000 a year plus £5,000 in performance-related bonuses. His salary as housing director of the aborted housing trust was £60,000 a year plus £5,000 bonuses.

Neither Mr Robinson nor Mr Taylor were available last night for comment on their pay-offs.

Mr Fatchett said: "The MoD started out with plans to make £500 million from this sell-off. Despite spending £5 million [the total cost of setting up the trust], not one house has been transferred to the trust."

He said that the only people to have gained from the fiasco were "the legions of management consultants" who picked up £3 million in fees.

Mr Fatchett said: "This whole episode is a further example of waste and incompetence from the MoD. Who is going to accept responsibility for this obvious failure of government policy and how is the MoD going to fill the £500 million hole in its budget?"

There are currently 70,548 married service quarters, of which 2,301 are in the process of being disposed of and 98,992 are empty. About 1,800 of them are being held for families being redeployed from Germany and 1,930 are undergoing maintenance repairs.



Fatchett denounced "MoD waste"

## Nappy puts Chancellor in the gaffe zone again

By ANDREW PIERCE AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

ONLY days after praising the Consett steelworks that shut 15 years ago, Kenneth Clarke yesterday hailed the performance of a nappy factory in the same town which closed in 1991. Mr Clarke blundered during a BBC radio interview in which he had tried to make up for the gaffe over the Consett factory, Co Durham, which closed with the loss of almost 4,000 jobs in 1980.

The Chancellor disclosed how he had been sent samples from the Phileas Fogg snack factory, one of Consett's post-steelwork success stories, after he slipped up in an interview on Radio Newcastle.

"They sent me a great packet of their really rather excellent crisps which I do know are made in Consett, which I think is also one of the major centres in western Europe for disposable baby nappies as well," he told BBC Radio 5 Live. "But I don't wish to have a cardboard box full of baby nappies coming to 11 Downing Street. I will settle for the crisps."

The Chancellor will have little choice. The Bluebird Care nappy factory that he was referring to closed in 1991 with the loss of 125 jobs.

Neil Johnson, chief executive of Derwent District Council, based in Consett, telephoned the Treasury to alert them to the Chancellor's latest gaffe. Mr Johnson said: "Wasn't he the Minister who went on about digging a hole?"

Mr Clarke was 15 years behind the times with the gaffe about the steelworks. With the nappy factory he was at least



Kenneth Clarke after the Cabinet meeting yesterday

in the right decade. Perhaps next week's cock-up will bring him into the future.

Mr Clarke has long trodden the thin political line that divides honesty from the blunder. However, even close Tory colleagues admit he has been straying ever more frequently into the "gaffe zone".

After the Conservatives were humiliated in the 1993 local council elections and Newbury by-election, he fur-

ther eroded Tory MPs' morale by saying the Government was "in a dreadful hole". When Education Secretary, he described some teachers as "cranks" and upset readers of the *Daily Mirror* by dismissing them as "morons".

While Home Secretary, he was ridiculed by Labour MPs during the Commons consideration of the Maastricht treaty when he admitted that he had not read the treaty.

Lord Mackay said he was keen to encourage legal aid work of good quality. The Legal Aid Board's franchising initiative provided evidence that work done in a particular field "is of a predetermined quality".

Among the factors he said he had taken into account were the time and skill the work required, the general level of expenses attributable to legal aid work, fee income arising from legal aid work, and the number and competence of solicitors doing it.

He also announced a rise in line with inflation of 1.8 per cent on the qualifying income limits for legal aid.

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John Patten, page 16  
Leading article, page 17

## Major fights for feel-good factor

Continued from page 1  
support among Tory MPs yesterday. But his sentiments are shared by some on the Right, particularly outside Parliament, who think that the party will rediscover a sense of mission only in opposition.

Lady Thatcher was said not to be among them. One of her close associates said last night: "It is one of those famous views. It's just bizarre. It's like saying I hope we lose all the Test matches this summer so we can win them all next summer. We want the longest

possible period of Conservative rule. Alistair [Lord McAlpine] is only showing his frustration at the way the Government is behaving."

Mr Clarke's candid admission that it could be two years before people felt more secure was an even more damaging development in the eyes of most Conservative MPs.

Some ministers said that he had again been too frank for his own good; others were angry that the Chancellor had clumsily undermined attempts by fellow Cabinet min-

isters and Mr Major to raise hopes that the recovery would soon be felt.

Mr Clarke declined to retract his forecast yesterday. He said: "The figures were good yesterday. Unemployment is down again. Retail sales were up again, and I say what I usually say, which is that this has all got to go on for a long time before we all start to get the benefits of it."



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## Ferry firm on brink of collapse

By JONATHAN PRYNN  
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

MERIDIAN Ferries, the company at the centre of a dispute with French sailors over its low-paid crew, is expected to call in the receivers today.

The company's business has dropped severely since the start of the dispute, which saw riots at French ports, and is £1.5 million in debt. Rescue hopes were fading last night, despite last-ditch talks with French officials in Boulogne.

"It's looking like the end," one Meridian manager said. "The jobs have gone."

The ferries *Spirit of Boulogne* and *Spirit of Independence* remained impounded in France yesterday by Boulogne Chamber of Commerce, which is claiming £750,000 in unpaid harbour fees. Meridian says it owes £180,000.

Efforts to find a buyer for the company have failed and the 50 staff are expected to be out of work by this evening.

The Folkestone company has lost about £700,000 revenue during the two-month dispute, over the use of low-paid Polish crews instead of European Union seamen, and its weekly loads have shrunk from 800 lorries per ship to about 350.

Managers blamed the British and French governments for not supporting the company. Kevin Root, a director, criticised Michael Howard, Home Secretary, who is the local MP. "If Michael Howard had stood up and been counted we would not be in this position," he said.

## Factory is fined over child labour

By KATE ALDERSON

A FACTORY that employed nine children in conditions where they risked electrocution working among bare wires has been fined £16,500.

Health and safety inspectors found children as young as 13 working for the Independent Packaging Company in Leek, Staffordshire, and said that the case could be "the tip of the iceberg." The children worked part-time until as late as 10pm and at weekends. Most were illegally employed on a piece-work basis packing bags with toys and sweets but some worked with dangerous equipment.

Magistrates at Leek fined the company £16,500 plus costs after it admitted eight charges brought by the Health and Safety Executive. The owners were prosecuted for one specimen charge of illegally employing a child: allowing an untrained teenager to drive a fork-lift truck; failure to fence off dangerous cutting equipment, and having a hole in the factory floor.

Stephen Flanagan, a factory inspector for the HSE, said: "Even if children were not working in this factory I would describe the conditions as dangerous for adults."

"The clamp on the unguarded guillotine was capable of inflicting a crushing blow and there was a clear risk of amputation from the blade. Children ran a real risk of electrocution from exposed wires." He added: "Statistics show that this case could be the tip of the iceberg."

## Employers backed by Lords in union case

The House of Lords yesterday rejected an Appeal Court decision that had supported employees' rights not to be penalised for belonging to a trade union.

Five law lords held in two test cases, involving journalists at the *Daily Mail* and Southampton docks workers employed by Associated British Ports, that the withholding of pay rises from employees who refused to sign individual personal contracts giving up their union-based negotiating rights did not amount to unlawful action aimed at preventing or deterring them from being union members, or penalising them for their membership.

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## Grobbelaar trains

Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers, two of the Premiership footballers freed on police bail during investigations into match fixing, went back to training yesterday. John Hoddinott, Chief Constable of Hampshire, whose force also arrested John Fashanu and two others, said there were no plans for further arrests.

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## Welland's tax reprieve

The Oscar-winning scriptwriter and actor Colin Welland escaped bankruptcy proceedings in the High Court yesterday after receiving a demand from the Inland Revenue for nearly £100,000. The High Court dismissed a petition against Mr Welland, author of *Chariots of Fire*, after he made a last-minute agreement to repay the tax.

## Beattie freed on parole

A man jailed 22 years ago for a murder he has always denied was freed on parole yesterday. George Beattie, right, was 19 when he was convicted of stabbing Margaret McLaughlin, 23, to death in Carlisle, Strathclyde. He has been the subject of two BBC *Rough Justice* programmes but lost an appeal against conviction four months ago. He has been freed before on licence.



## New evidence delays Iraqi arms report

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON, WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS and officials criticised in early drafts of Lord Justice Scott's report into the "arms for Iraq" affair have submitted fresh evidence to try to soften the case against them and their departments in the final report.

Although no one outside Sir Richard Scott's inner circle has seen a complete draft of his report, sections critical of named individuals have been sent to those concerned. Ministers and civil servants named in the report were invited to respond to the criticisms before

publication, and "have done so with vigour", according to one source.

Lord Justice Scott had hoped to publish his report in April. The further evidence is believed to be the main reason for its delay until at least June.

It was reported yesterday that Customs and Excise officials, unhappy with the draft of the section about their handling of the Matrix Churchill prosecution, feared they would be made scapegoats. However, a source who has seen some sections of the report said yesterday: "They should

be reassured that they will be far from the only ones to come under fire."

Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney-General, who will be criticised for authorising public interest immunity certificates — "gagging orders" — to suppress evidence crucial to Matrix Churchill's defence, is said to be unhappy about sections of the report. Peter Lilley, then Secretary of State at the Trade and Industry Department, which issued the export licence, and who also signed gagging orders, is also known to have responded angrily to the draft.



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# Police buy firearms from underworld to cut armed offences

By Gillian Bowditch, Scotland Correspondent

GUNS are now so common in the West of Scotland that police have been given permission to buy the weapons to take them out of circulation, the Chief Constable of Strathclyde said yesterday.

Leslie Sharp said criminals in Glasgow could hire firearms for as little as £50 a day and discounts were available if they were returned unfired. If his officers could make an arrest, they would, but getting the guns out of circulation was the priority. He refused to say how much the force had spent but in the last year it has recovered 790 guns. Some had come from the Gulf War.

Gun racketeers will offer criminals a discount of 30 per cent if the gun is not used and thus has no forensic history.

Although crime in the region has fallen by 5 per cent overall, violent crime is up and

crimes involving firearms are up by 67 per cent. About 85 per cent of all the armed robberies in Scotland take place in Strathclyde, with nearly one a day at present. As a result police in the area are carrying guns more often.

Mr Sharp said: "The frequency with which firearms are being authorised means that we are creeping towards an armed police force."

He said armed patrol vehicles no longer carried their weapons in a locked box in the boot but in the front of the car so that police could respond more quickly. In certain instances officers were now "self-authorising".

Speaking at the launch of the force's annual report for 1994, Mr Sharp said 3,400 firearms had been recovered since the beginning of 1992 when Operation Spur was

launched. These include four Kalashnikov assault rifles and a Sten MK2 sub-machine gun.

He said many crimes were committed with replica guns and so-called "de-activated" guns which did not need a licence. "There is now a cottage industry in Strathclyde which can reactivate a gun in 30 minutes and turn it into a lethal weapon. Legislation should be introduced to control these guns."

Mr Sharp said that because of measures taken by banks and building societies, fewer suffered armed robberies. He believed armed criminals had moved to softer targets such as petrol stations and shops.

Speaking of violence in Paisley, where there were five gun-related incidents in 48 hours earlier this week and one man was shot dead, Mr Sharp said there was no shoot-to-kill policy as such. But he added: "Our officers trained to use firearms are taught to use them to stop criminals, they are not taught to maim or shoot them in the leg."

He said the police were closing in for a final swoop in Paisley and he indicated that territorial fights by drug dealers were the cause of the trouble. "Drugs now permeate every aspect of crime. If you lock up one dealer, five more come in to take over his territory."

Mr Sharp said it was important to point out that violent crime touched the lives of very few people. Crime in total was now running at around 1984 levels in Strathclyde and the crimes which affected most people, house breaking and theft, were significantly down.

He said a high-profile campaign against drugs, involving stopping and searching and roadblocks, would soon be launched.

## Forces' weapons worn and broken

MANY police guns checked in a Home Office survey were found to be worn, broken and in need of replacement. Others were over-oiled or had not been cleaned before storage (Stewart Tiedler writes).

The survey of 15 provincial forces, conducted for the Inspectorate of Constabulary, found that a "gun culture" was developing among police. There were problems, however, with decisions on the issue of guns and senior officers had little idea of the work of marksmen.

A "significant" number of forces needed new guns. In one force the heads for a special network of radio used by marksmen had become

defective and not been repaired. Another held a stock of special grenades used to distract gunmen but had no policy on how to use them.

The report suggested that weapons training lacked flair and imagination because instructors had been long-serving. All forces reached minimum levels of marksmanship but some had not yet reached national standards for rapid intervention and hostage rescue.

The survey also found that many officers patrolled alone with little chance of swift support if they came under attack. Some would have to wait up to 30 minutes for assistance.

## Judge condemns neighbours' feud

By Bill Erost

A FEUD between an unemployed double-glazing salesman and his elderly neighbours has been halted by a judge who said it had shaken his faith in human nature.

Skirmishing began two-and-a-half years ago with an altercation over a broken fence. Peace was restored to the cul-de-sac in the Devon resort of Westward Ho! only after an 11-day hearing at Barnstaple County Court. Judge Turner said the feud was "the most wretched and miserable" neighbours' dispute he had ever heard.

The court had been told that Clark Fox, 33, and his wife Lorraine, 31, had moved to the resort in September 1992. Within hours, words had been exchanged with Roy Swainston and his wife Eileen, who lived next door over litter on a driveway. Mr Fox subsequently "daubed offensive graffiti on his garage wall, which backs on to the Swainstons' property," said James Townsend, representing the elderly couple. Mr Fox told Mr Swainston, 71, in "very abusive" terms to remove his nesting boxes from the wall.

The feud gathered pace, with Mr Fox allegedly siphoning off the contents of the

Swainstons' water butt, claiming it was a health hazard; breaking down the fence between the bungalows and letting his dogs "run wild" in the pensioners' garden.

In 1993, police were called after Mr Swainston complained about the newcomers' radio. Mr Fox was subsequently convicted of a breach of the peace.

Mr Swainston kept a diary detailing each engagement in what the judge described as the neighbours' war of attrition. By the time the feud came to court he had made nearly 1,000 entries.

The Swainstons decided on a civil action for damages. The Foxes issued a counter-claim for damages, claiming their neighbours' "spying" had ruined their lives and that their car had been damaged.

The judge upheld most of the Swainstons' case and awarded them £4,000 damages. The Foxes were also ordered to pay the bulk of their neighbours' legal costs, estimated at £23,000. But he said Mr Swainston was "patriarchal and strong minded" and awarded the Foxes £500 in damages for his "spying". The Foxes said later that they intended to move.

## Car driver tells of fatal bus crash

By Kathryn Knight

A MOTORIST told a court yesterday how he desperately tried to prevent a double-decker bus hitting a low bridge.

Three guides and two of their leaders were killed and fifteen others injured when the bus hit a railway bridge in Glasgow last September.

Gary Shaw, 34, told Glasgow Sheriff Court that he chased after the bus, flashing his lights, when he realised that it was heading for a collision.

"I knew it would not get under the bridge and I tried to stop it. I could tell the driver did not know where he was going." He then heard what he thought was an explosion as the bus hit the bridge. "The whole of its roof dropped off on to the ground."

John Healy, 48, who tried to help the injured, said that the top deck of the bus was "a scene of carnage".

The bus driver, Campbell Devlin, 30, from Cathcart, Glasgow, denies dangerous driving and causing the five deaths. He also denies driving the bus while the recording equipment was defective, and failing to observe signs warning of the bridge.

## New Age travellers hatched suicide pact after squabble

By Michael Horsnell

A BRIGHT but naive young woman from a middle-class home who fell under the spell of a drug-addict formed a suicide pact with other New Age travellers, an inquest was told yesterday.

By the time Sophie Holmes, 19, died from a deliberate overdose, she and her domineering boyfriend, Chris Austin, 27, each had a £50-a-day habit. The story of her death from a cocktail of heroin, methadone and trichloroacetic acid was told by her mother Christine Holmes, a primary school teacher.

Mrs Holmes begged Sophie to abandon her lifestyle and return home but she was unable to leave Mr Austin. Mrs Holmes told the hearing that her daughter met him while she was a student at the London College of Printing.

She said: "After her course finished in the summer of 1993 they began living together in a

field near Winchester. Her health deteriorated and I was very concerned. She lost weight and became quite thin and pale. I asked her if she was taking drugs and she told me she wasn't. She felt very frustrated about their housing situation but could not see a way out."

Karen Sethsmith, a traveller, told the inquest: "The last time I saw them Sophie was crying because Chris had been in a fight with one of the other travellers. He had bruises on his face. Sophie asked me if I thought half a gramme of heroin and a bottle of whisky would be enough for an overdose. Later Chris asked me the same question and when they left Sophie cuddled me and said goodbye."

Miss Holmes was found dead but her boyfriend refused to allow paramedics into the lorry and police had to break into the vehicle where hand-written notes from each were found. Chris was taken

to hospital where he was at one stage found injecting himself in a lavatory.

He was taken to North Walls police station in Winchester on August 14 last year. On arrival he was examined by a police surgeon and marked down as a suicide risk. He slept and at 9am was given breakfast but minutes later was found dead.

Dr Alexander Forrest, a forensic toxicologist, said: "He was like a walking dead man. The mass of drug in his stomach would have suddenly started working and he would have died rapidly. The likely trigger was the breakfast."

A jury, sitting because Chris Austin died in custody, returned a verdict of suicide on his death. Graham Short, the Mid-Hampshire coroner, also recorded a verdict of suicide on Miss Holmes. He said: "It was essentially a suicide pact and I am satisfied she took the drugs with the intention of taking her own life."



Jerome Arnouf, a student at the Royal Academy, gives way to the musical computer

## Computer lends hand for tough piano concert

By Dalya Alberge, Arts Correspondent

TWO piano pieces by an avant-garde Hungarian composer are so difficult to perform that a computer is having to stand in for the pianist at a concert tonight.

Few pianists can read György Ligeti's intricate score with its spidery notation, let alone display the stamina required and keep their fingers untangled during the more difficult passages.

To play the études by Ligeti, who wrote some of the music for the film 2001: A Space Odyssey, a piano is connected to a computer sitting on the piano stool. Dressed for the occasion in a bow tie, it will play the keys and pedals in a state-of-the-art variation of the pianola at the tenth International Composers Festival at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

The computer reads the score and sends the information into an electrical digital box attached to the standard Yamaha piano and electric motors depress the keys.

Paul Patterson, head of composition at the Royal Academy, said: "In a way, this piece is difficult only in that it's very fast with very complicated chord patterns. The fingers don't fall into normal patterns as they do in Mozart. They're all over the piano. And it's physically demanding as it starts about as loud as you can go. That's like five rounds with Frank Tyson or a boxer lashing out in all direc-

tions. And you're expected to play the right notes as well."

Professor Patterson added: "There are no melodies. It's very fast and textural, like a swarm of bees buzzing. It's like a kaleidoscope of colours."

He said that when they contacted the composer to break the news to him, they were "terribly nervous". "But he heard it performed and thought the computer was fantastic." In fact he was so impressed he asked for brochures about the system.

The computer is a Sibelius 7, named after the Finnish composer. It is so sophisticated that it could make a piano perform dazzling feats far beyond the reach of any human hands. It even dispenses with the need for a page-turner: each manuscript sheet is displayed as the computer plays it, moving on automatically to the next page.

The pianist Alfred Brendel said: "You need three or five hands to play Ligeti. But it's worth the trouble." He said Ligeti pieces were not playable at short notice. "They are only playable by some talented wizard. They need a great deal of expertise." But he recommended the effort, saying that Ligeti wrote some of the best contemporary works for the keyboard. "I have inspired some young pianists to try them. I say, 'If you are feeling heroic...'"

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Food refused to thwart parents

## Children under five develop anorexia

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

AN INFANT version of anorexia is affecting children under five. They are failing to grow normally because they refuse to eat as a way of rebelling against parents.

One child in 20 is failing to thrive because of problems with eating that have no medical cause, according to studies by Bath University. In the worst cases the children have to be drip-fed in hospital. A report launched by the charity The Children's Society yesterday estimates that 185,000 children in Britain are malnourished because of food refusal but a third of cases go unidentified by doctors and social workers. "If left untreated, failure to thrive can lead to restricted growth and mental development. In extreme cases it can be fatal," the report says.

Dr Hampton, author of the report, said many parents were driven to despair, offering the child snacks and titbits through the day or forcing

food into their mouths until they gag.

"Almost all families will experience feeding difficulties with their children at some point. They are resolved readily with advice from granny, a neighbour or a health visitor. The children I'm talking about are those for whom the advice doesn't work. It is not just a case of a child refusing to eat supper last night — it is a continuing refusal to eat."

Ms Hampton, who runs The Children's Society's infant support project in Swindon, Wiltshire, the only unit in Britain helping families with eating problems, said: "Parents have usually exhausted their repertoire of tactics by the time they get to us. Mealtimes have become full of stress, anger and tension. The first message to them is: relax."

Ms Hampton said there was increasing discussion among doctors and social workers about the links be-

tween adolescent anorexia and infant failure to thrive.

Children as young as seven have been treated for anorexia at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children in London. Jane Batchelor, lecturer in social work at Bath University, who carried out the studies, said failure to thrive and anorexia could both be linked with the parents' attitude to food and eating. "Food refusal has an emotional point. It is a problem for the whole family," she said.

The Infant Support Project, set up by The Children's Society four years ago, has counselled 300 families with a successful outcome for all those who completed treatment that varied from a few weeks to several months.

Small changes such as eating with the child, moving the high chair so the parent and child are not facing eyeball to eyeball, and allowing the child to feed itself can help to break the pattern of food refusal.



Martyn and Karen Newell yesterday. He said they loved their unplanned child

## Damages after vasectomy fails

A COUPLE who had a baby six years after the husband had a vasectomy won a claim in the High Court for damages against a surgeon yesterday for failing to give warning that it might not work.

Mr Justice Mummery awarded Martyn Newell, 37, and his wife Karen, 34, who already

had two children, £500 for anxiety and distress over the unexpected birth of their son Charley in 1992. He dismissed their claim for damages of £69,000 for the child's upkeep, an extension at their home in Edenbridge, Kent, and loss of earnings. The judge ruled that they would not have

taken further precautions even if they had been warned. The couple had rejected an out-of-court settlement offer of £10,000, and their £500 damages will be dawked back by the Legal Aid Fund. Dr Solomon Goldenberg, of Wandsworth, admitted failing to give warning of the risk.

## Cigarette firms face new cancer evidence

By NIGEL HAWKES  
SCIENCE EDITOR

A GENETIC mutation caused by smoking has provided the long-suspected link between cigarettes and cancer. The discovery may lead to evidence that could be used by smokers in lawsuits against tobacco companies.

The finding by American scientists could make it possible to identify smoking as the specific cause of some people's cancers, which hitherto has had to be inferred.

A team from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, studied patients with cancer of the mouth, pharynx and larynx. They found that mutations in a gene called p53 were twice as common in those who smoked and more than three times as common in those who smoked and drank than in those who did neither.

The results show that tobacco-smoking damages the p53 gene in specific ways and that drinking may augment the effect by increasing the frequency of mutations. Non-smokers suffered from different p53 mutations, which means the smoking mutation may serve as evidence that cigarettes were the cause of any individual's cancer. Dr Stephen Goodman says.

The p53 gene normally offers protection against cancer. When damaged, the loss of the protective effect allows cells to evolve that can grow more rapidly than normal cells, eventually leading to cancer, the team reports in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

The link between smoking and this type of cancer is not new but until now has been based on epidemiological evidence. The team, led by Dr David Sidransky, examined 129 patients with cancers of head and neck and searched for the gene mutations in tumour samples from them.

A study of 600 smokers found they were fully aware of, and even overestimated, the risk of developing cancer. The Economic and Social Research Council says its report suggests that anti-smoking campaigns centred on the risk are a waste of time.

## Operations 'should be done by nurses'

Nurses should take the place of surgeons and perform operations on NHS patients. *The Lancet* says in a leading article. There was no reason why trained and supervised nurses should not take over some routine surgical work done by junior doctors and they would probably do it better. The NHS needed fewer fully trained surgeons.

Most theatre nurses "have vastly more experience of instruments, operations, and operating techniques than medical students and most junior surgical trainees".

## Survey funds

The Wellcome Trust is to spend £50 million on population studies over the next five years. The money may be used for surveys of sexual behaviour and lifestyle, which the research charity says much is still not known. It will consider funding "well-argued proposals" across the field.

## Remedy recalled

A dozen batches of an impotence remedy have been recalled over fears that they could be contaminated with stainless steel particles. The pharmaceutical company Upjohn recalled the Caverject powder after particles were found in another product not available in Britain.

## 'Stone baby' case

A woman who died at 92 had been carrying a dead baby — long since calcified — in her uterus for 60 years, two doctors at the University of Vienna have reported. In a letter to *The Lancet*, they say that radiography of the woman "showed a stone child" that had died at 31 weeks.

## Village vaccine

Hundreds of Scottish villagers are to be vaccinated against the Hepatitis A virus after the contamination of the local water supply with sewage. About half of the 1,200 inhabitants of the village of Freuchie in Fife suffered vomiting and diarrhoea as a result of the poisoning.

## MEDICAL BRIEFING

### The dilemma of premature birth

Doctors looking after Girl B, the patient being treated for acute myeloid leukaemia despite having only a very small chance of survival, worry that their treatment might hasten her end.

Conversely, at the Central Middlesex Hospital, where Jacqueline May Watson died 23 weeks after conception, doctors recommended against neo-natal treatment as it might have kept her alive.

Dr Thomas Stuttard, who is in charge of the neonatal unit, said: "There is little hard evidence about the long-term effects of surviving extreme immaturity. Although the chances of survival itself are well-recorded, the minor, or subtle changes in speech, intellectual performance, behaviour and physical co-ordination are often less charted."

If they are known, they are unlikely to be related to details of the patient's delivery, neo-natal history and later nourishment. That Watson family seem to have had scant emotional support during a stressful time. The hospital used the well-tried medical euphemism and said that the situation "might have been handled better".

Doctors are aware from the available statistics that a baby delivered in the 23rd week is unlikely to survive and, if she survives, is unlikely to escape severe mental and physical damage.

The choice of what is to be done after a confinement apparently early in pregnancy has to be a combined decision. Dr John Fysh, a consultant paediatrician at the Portland Hospital for Women and Children, London, and formerly a lecturer in neo-natal medicine at King's College Hospital, London, said: "The nature and the extent of treatment offered to a very premature child has to be a decision made between the doctors, both the paediatricians and the obstetricians, and the parents. Any

plan of action they discuss should, preferably, be decided before delivery.

"The parents may well want to involve their spiritual advisers as well. The doctors are there to help the patients in every way. Few doctors would refuse a parent's wish even when they thought that their decision was a sensible one."

Dr Fysh said that most paediatricians regarded 24 weeks of pregnancy as a cut-off point. Before that, the chance of survival without the likelihood of physical and mental handicap is too gross to allow the child to lead a normal life later was fairly small. Unfortunately, there was no way of predicting with certainty which very few tiny babies would do well. And he estimated that even 40 per cent of those delivered under the 26th week would suffer from cerebral haemorrhage and later spasticity, blindness from retinal disease, deafness and mental retardation.

The tragedy is that very immature neo-natal babies suffer brain damage akin to that of a stroke, and a stroke in the cot is every bit as damaging as one in the geriatric ward, the essential difference being that the handicaps caused by it have to be borne for up to 80 years.

The relative ignorance in the pattern of a child's life after delivery is being investigated by an Anglo-American study in Avon in which 14,000 children are now being followed. At present they are 2½ years old and their abilities as regards speech, sight, hearing, mental development, as well as psychological background, are being related to their delivery, diet and home background.

This international survey may finally enable doctors to answer the distraught parent's question: "What chance has my child of surviving and if she survives of having a happy and full life?"

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'A classic case for parliamentary investigation'

## Lords criticise law on age of criminal knowledge

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

THE House of Lords called on Parliament yesterday to reform the "serious shortcomings" of the law that children under the age of 14 cannot be convicted of a crime unless they are proved to know right from wrong. In a test ruling that will lead to fresh debate on the age of criminal responsibility, five law lords said the present law gave rise to anomalies and absurdities.

Lord Lowry, giving the lead opinion, said: "This is a classic case for parliamentary investi-

gation, deliberation and legislation. I believe that the time has come to examine further a doctrine which appears to have been inconsistently applied and which is certainly capable of producing inconsistent results."

The law lords upheld the presumption that children between the ages of 10 and 14 are incapable of committing a crime unless it is proved that they know what they are doing is morally or legally wrong. The principle was last high-

lighted by the James Bulger murder trial in which two boys, then aged 10, were convicted of murdering the two-year-old.

Lord Lowry said yesterday it had been argued that "the presumption is an outmoded survival from an age in which criminal guilt was inevitably followed by ferocious retribution". He added: "But while times have greatly changed since the days when children of 8 and 10 were hanged for offences much less heinous

than murder, it should be observed that the purpose and effect of the presumption is still to protect children between 10 and 14 from the full force of the criminal law."

Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle questioned whether a "blanket presumption" was the best way to protect children who did not know they were doing wrong from the criminal law. There must be many offenders under 14 who were "very well aware" that what they were doing was seriously wrong.

The law lords' comments came in an appeal by a Merseyside boy, referred to as C, against his conviction by Liverpool magistrates in September 1992 for interfering with a motorcycle with the intention to commit theft.

The boy appealed unsuccessfully to the divisional court against the conviction last year. However, the court judges, Lord Justice Mann and Mr Justice Laws, took the opportunity to remove what they described as an "utterly outrageous" and "outdated" common law principle which for decades had protected children from punishment for their crimes. They said the common law principle should no longer be part of the law of England.

Yesterday the law lords overturned their ruling. They said the presumption was still part of the common law, even though the time was ripe to review it.

Lord Lowry, however, praised the High Court judges for their "bold and imaginative judgment" which had drawn attention to the "serious shortcomings in an important area of our criminal law".

They allowed the boy's appeal on the grounds that in his case the prosecution had not met the burden of proof and had failed to provide "clear and positive evidence" that he knew what he was doing was wrong.

Law report, page 34

## Breeders at Cruft's support docking of tails

By Emma Wilkins

BREEDERS of show dogs admitted yesterday that they seek out vets prepared to dock their animals' tails in the quest for prizes at Cruft's.

As the 104th dog show opened at the NEC in Birmingham, owners and judges defended the practice, which is regarded as unjustified mutilation by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. A code of conduct issued by the RCVS two years ago bars vets from docking tails for cosmetic reasons.

This year is the first time that puppies, which could have been protected by the rules, can be shown at Cruft's. But in the puppy section of the English springer spaniel class, which was judged yesterday, none of the entries had its tail intact.

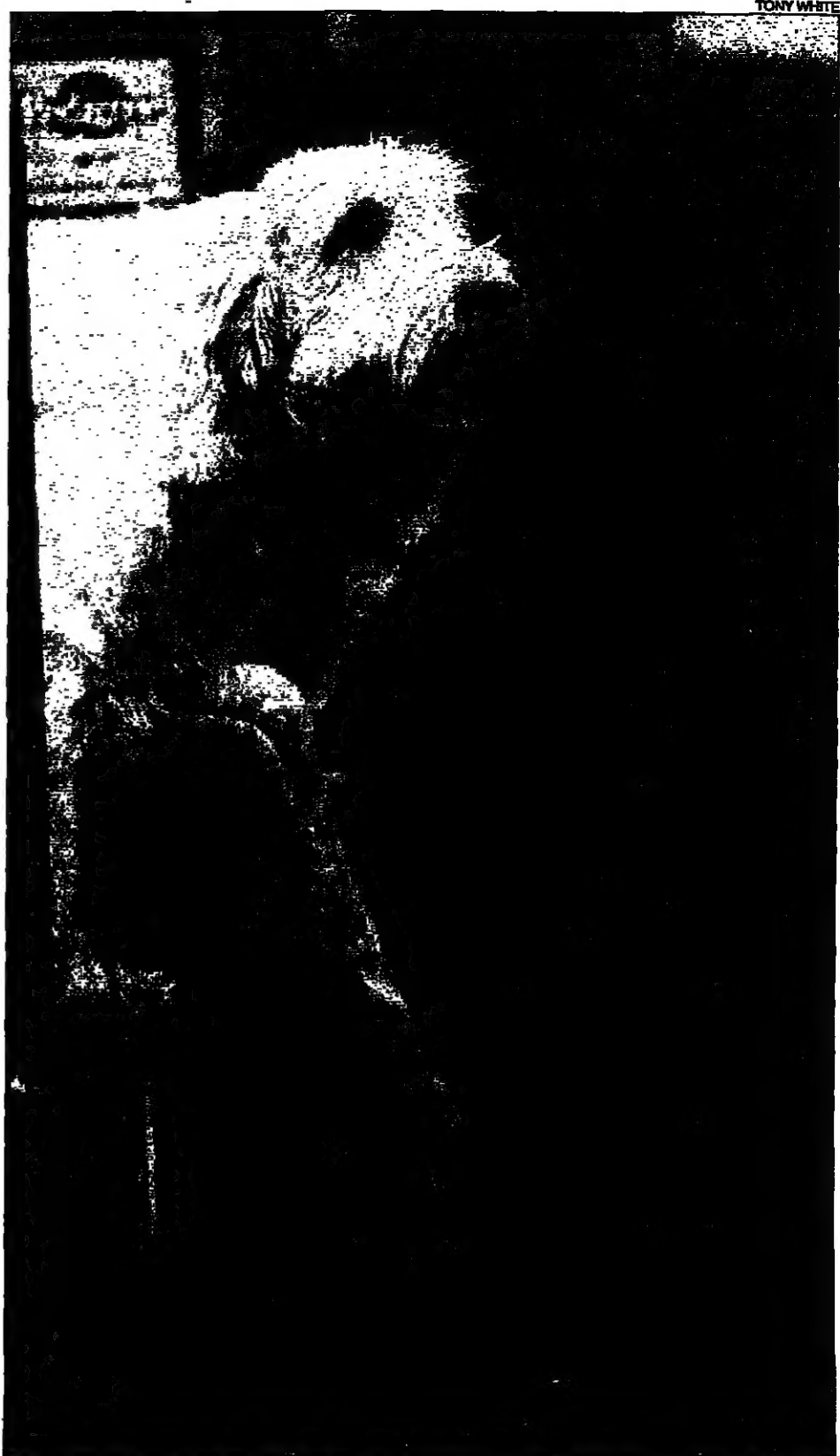
Tom Bury, 54, whose wife Dorothy owns the winning puppy, Lyndora Game Boy, said he had travelled 30 miles from his home in Chorley, Lancashire, to find a vet prepared to dock the animal's tail.

The practice is still allowed by the RCVS for working dogs that might injure their tails in rough cover, or where the tail is already broken, but about 5 per cent of vets are still docking tails solely for cosmetic reasons. The RCVS issued its rules after government legislation in 1993, which made it illegal for anyone other than a vet to dock tails.

Mr Bury said: "I didn't give a reason to the vet as to why I wanted the tail docked. Obviously he's leaving himself open to the RCVS code."

"A lot of vets are frightened of being disciplined and are not prepared to dock, but there are some who will do it," he added.

Mr Bury, who has judged and bred English springer spaniels for 23 years, said dogs with docked tails were more likely to win prizes. "If I were judging two dogs which



Two-legged friend: Gino, an Italian spinone, waits with a companion at the NEC

were equal in all other respects, but one had a tail intact, I would probably go for the one with the docked tail," he said. Docking did not hurt. "It's traditional to dock the tail. The tissue at the end

of a spaniel's tail is very weak and damages easily."

Geoffrey Nicholls, who was judging the English springer spaniel class, said he preferred the tail removed but believed that docking would

eventually die out. "People who are coming into the game now will get used to dogs with tails."

Diary, page 16  
Results, page 18

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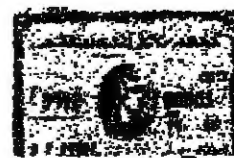
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## International bishops' conference Homosexuals are made in God's image, says Carey

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

LEADERS of the 70 million-strong worldwide Anglican Communion accepted yesterday that homosexuals could live lives of "genuine Christian character" despite being at variance with Christian moral tradition.

Thirty-six bishops and archbishops agreed to re-examine their stance on homosexuality and spoke of "serious questions relating to human sexuality" being faced by the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, said homosexuals were people made "in the image and likeness of God".

In a pastoral letter published after a week-long meeting at Windsor, the church leaders said that a "careful process" of reflection was needed. The issue is expected to be hotly debated at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the ten-yearly international gathering of Anglican leaders.

In an early sign of the tone of the debate to come, Colin Hart, director of the Christian Institute, a research body, called on the archbishops "to dismiss all clergy who are practising homosexuals and for bishops who are unable to uphold the plain teaching of the Bible to be disciplined".

Although individual churches, such as the Church of England, have published reports on sexuality, the pastoral letter marked the furthest that international church leaders have gone towards conceding the need for change.

Their statement follows a week of unprecedented pressure on church leaders when the Bishop of London, Dr David Hope, accused the gay rights group OutRage! of intimidatory tactics in its attempt to force him to "out" himself. Dr Hope said he was celibate, conceded that his sexuality was ambiguous but did not say that he was gay.

The traditional Anglican response to such pressures is to affirm the Christian moral precepts as set out in the Bible,

where homosexuality is described as an abomination. But in their pastoral letter, the 36 primates said: "We are conscious that, within the Church itself, there are those whose pattern of sexual expression is at variance with the received Christian moral tradition, but whose lives in other respects demonstrate the marks of genuine Christian character."

They said: "The issues are deep and complex. They do not always admit of easy answers." The leaders called on "every part of the Church to face the questions about sexuality and the image and likeness of God".



Carey: gays "made in image of God"

ality with honesty and integrity, avoiding unnecessary confrontation and polarisation."

At a press conference at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park, Dr Carey said: "We reject homophobia in any form. Homosexuals must be treated as people made in the image and likeness of God." The questions must be analysed in a way that took account of human experience as well as Bible teaching.

"When I refer to the image and likeness of God, I am talking about their value as people. It is not making any implicit statement about whether sexuality is implanted by God at the particular moment in their creation." He said further scientific work on

the issue of homosexuality needed to be done.

Archbishop Keith Rayner of Australia said: "A clear Christian tradition rooted in the Bible has come down to us through the moral theology of the Church about Christian sexuality and its expression."

"Yet we are finding there are people whose lives show all the marks of Christian character and yet in some way are not conforming to those patterns."

He said that scientific study and human experience had to be taken into account, "just as the Church has had to modify its views on marriage and divorce in the light of human experience".

Archbishop Edmond Browning from America said: "Before we can wrestle with the issue of practising homosexuals, we have to wrestle with the issue of same-sex unions."

Arguing in effect for the Church to recognise same-sex relationships, Archbishop Browning said: "I have a feeling that if that issue could be addressed, and we could look at that sincerely in terms of two people who have committed themselves to a lifetime commitment, that would say something about how we saw that lifestyle and about the holiness of that lifestyle."

Dr Hope's legal adviser has written to OutRage! asking for the details about the bishop's personal life that the group claims to possess. David Faulk also wants the identity of the church administrative workers who allegedly passed on the information.

Peter Tatchell of OutRage! said he would not give the information. "I originally wrote a private and confidential letter. This attempt to browbeat us with the law shows that the Church is running scared about possible further revelations."

Mr Faulk said he could not force Mr Tatchell to disclose his sources but people making such statements should support their claims.



The view at Wimpole Hall, near Cambridge, showing the now restored lake and folly, designed and laid out by Capability Brown

## National Trust handed garden secrets on a plate

By JOHN SHAW

SIX dessert plates from the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg have helped landscape architects to re-create part of a 200-year-old garden at Wimpole Hall near Cambridge.

The plates were part of a spectacular Wedgwood dinner service made for Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, in 1774. The 952-piece service showed 1,344 parkland and garden views at English country houses. Those depicting Wimpole illustrated the grounds shortly after they were laid out by Capability Brown, the celebrated landscape gardener. The original drawings have been lost and now the plates provide a unique visual record of the park at the end of the 18th century.

They show a gothic folly, a Chinese bridge, trees and two lakes created by Brown from fishponds. But the lower lake was lost in a storm in the 1930s. The restraining dam

burst and the water drained away. It was decided to restate the feature as the first phase of a massive project to restore Brown's vision.

The house is owned by the National Trust and the project has become its main scheme in East Anglia during centenary year. Sir Angus Stirling, director-general, was there yesterday to mark completion of the lake. He presented Graham Darnley, property manager of Wimpole, with a plaque to mark the opening of a new bridge and part of a new circular walk that leads visitors to the folly.

Sir Angus then embarked on an Edwardian steam-powered boat to enjoy the long-lost view of the grounds from the water. The north park is the most significant surviving portion of Brown's work and the site is the only Grade I listed park belonging to the trust in East Anglia.

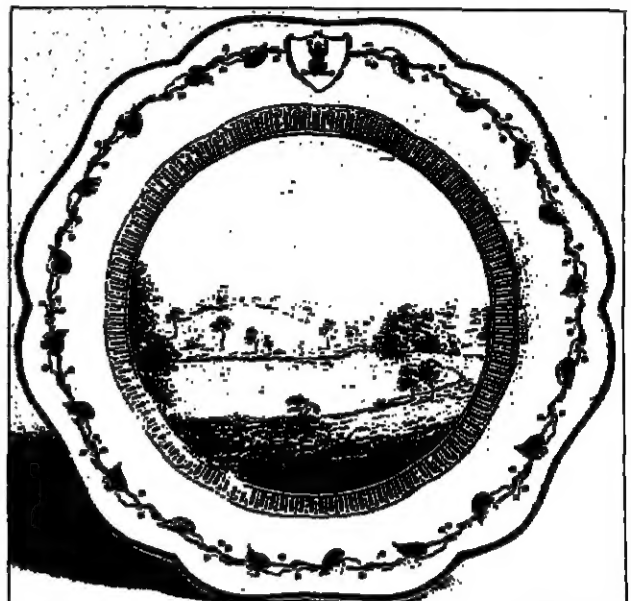
More than £65,000 has

been raised to fund the scheme and Sir Angus has appealed for a further £30,000 to continue work on the upper lake and surrounding parkland. Further money-raising efforts include a special concert at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, tomorrow and a sponsored walk this weekend.

David Adshead, historic buildings representative in the region, said: "The plates were very valuable because they are the only near-contemporary topographical views we have of the park Capability Brown landscaped."

"They will become increasingly valuable as we plant trees in the grounds. We have views along the length of the lower lake from East to West and vice-versa, and another view across the north park from the upper lake to the folly and a Chinese bridge."

The dessert service is well known but he said access to it had been "very hard indeed during the Soviet regime". A



One of the Wedgwood plates, used in restoration

Russian photographer was granted permission to see it recently and photographed all 1,344 scenes.

Mr Adshead said: "He then brought the pictures as hand baggage on a flight to London. It is the first time we have had a complete photographic record of the service. It is remarkable." The trust used the pictures and wartime

RAF reconnaissance photographs of the park "which show marshy reeds growing up so by the time we started work last year it was like a small forest".

Part of Catherine's service will be returning to Britain for the first time in more than 200 years this summer. It will be on show in a special Wedgwood exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

## Radio fans protest at merger plan

By ALEXANDRA FREAN  
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE Bishop of Oxford and the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University are urging the BBC to reconsider the planned merger of Radio Oxford and Radio Berkshire.

In a letter to *The Times* published today, the Right Rev Richard Harries and Peter North say the corporation's proposal is in direct conflict with the BBC's recent commitment to local programming. The letter states: "Oxford is a unique international centre and for the city not to have a local BBC radio station would be remarkable."

The letter is also signed by David Bryer, director of Oxfam, Lord Plumb MEP, Sir Patrick Nairne, former Master of St Catherine's College, Andrew Smith, Labour MP for Oxford East, and David W. Astor, a former chairman of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

A BBC spokesman said that the terms of the merger were still being discussed by a small working group and that no decision had been taken.

Letters, page 17

## Mother of Marchioness victim 'told to keep quiet'

By EDWARD GORMAN

THE mother of one of the victims of the Marchioness pleasure boat disaster spoke yesterday of her anguish and distress at finding that her daughter's hands had been cut off in a post-mortem examination.

Linda Ali-Hunt, whose only daughter Julie was among 51 people who died in August 1989 when the Marchioness sank after colliding with the dredger *Bowbelle* on the Thames, also disclosed that the police put considerable pressure on her never to raise the issue in public.

Ms Ali-Hunt, 52, a Unilever executive from south London, told the inquest she was denied access to her daughter's body at the funeral parlour because of its state of decomposition.

She then called to ask if she could sit by the body and hold her daughter's hand as a way of saying goodbye. She told Dr John Burton, the coroner, yesterday: "He [the undertaker] then said, 'Least of all that, as there are no hands.' I was totally overcome by this information."

Ms Ali-Hunt raised the

matter with police, who put pressure on her not to speak about it in public or at the preliminary inquest. "Their explanation was that I was one of the only mothers who they were speaking to directly, because the others were close to having nervous breakdowns," she said.

Later, police told her she was in danger of "simply destroying many families" if she persisted. Ms Ali-Hunt did not raise the matter until late 1991 when she informed fellow members of the relatives' support group only to discover that others knew about the amputations but had also said nothing.

Mrs Hunt said cutting the hands off victims was a barbaric and unnecessary mutilation which should have no place in a civilised society. "Whether the mutilation of the body was a direct abuse of power or an error of judgment, I do not know," she told the fourth day of the new inquest into the disaster.

"However, I strongly believe that this kind of action must never again be taken in these circumstances. The re-

moval of hands can be described as uncivilised and savagely cruel," Julie Hunt, 26, a model, was among scores of victims whose hands were removed during examinations without request being made to relatives or information being passed on to them. Under cross-examination by Michael Mansfield, QC, for the families, Dr Richard Shepherd, a Home Office pathologist who carried out 30 post-mortem examinations, said the hands were removed to help in identification and "to facilitate the process through the mortuary".

He said he had carried out some amputations himself but could not remember which. Dr Shepherd added that there was no documentation of the procedure or the people involved. Ms Ali-Hunt, in common with other relatives who gave evidence yesterday, believes she should have been able to identify her daughter's body herself and been given the chance to grieve properly. "Bereaved people are not china dolls," she told the inquest. "They do not need protecting to such an extent."

## Sued boy wins crash damages

A BOY sued by the driver of a car that ran over him won £3,500 damages for his injuries yesterday.

The legal action against Peter Biggs, then aged nine, had been adjourned indefinitely last year after an anonymous donor had paid a £200 repair bill of the driver, Sarah Dowson. Yesterday Peter's parents went back to court to claim compensation for their son, whose leg had been broken in two places. A judge in chambers at Colchester County Court in Essex awarded the damages after hearing how he had been knocked down as he crossed the road outside his home in the town.

Terry Bolton, the boy's solicitor, said: "Peter was originally sued on the grounds that he had been negligent in walking in front of the car. I argued that a nine-year-old is not competent of negligence. The case probably should never have come to court."

Peter was believed to be the youngest person to be sued in Britain in modern legal history. Lawyers for Miss Dowson, 21, of Abberton, claimed that she had not caused the accident and should not have had to pay for the repairs.

## Whitbread's widget brings draught taste to bottled beer

By NICK NUTTALL  
TECHNOLOGY  
CORRESPONDENT

THE delights of draught-style ale are being made available to drinkers of bottled beer seven years after Guinness unveiled its "widget in a can".

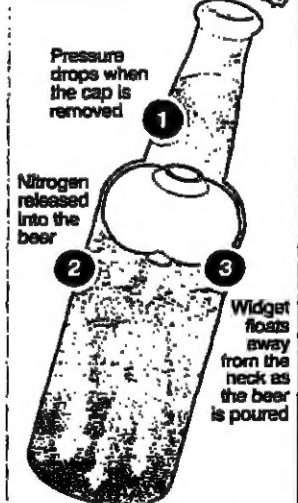
Whitbread, rivals with Guinness in the stout market, announced yesterday that it had developed the "widget in a bottle" after two years of intense research. The device is being installed in bottles of its Murphy's Irish stout to aid its battle with Guinness, Beamish and other brewers.

Widgets, devices that release nitrogen gas into beer cans to create a smoother, less fizzy drink, have transformed the domestic consumption market. Most of the big brewers have developed systems to rival Guinness's.

Whitbread, which owns Murphy's, introduced its Draughtlike system in Bottledings canned in 1991. Courage produces Caskpour and Bass produces In-Can Draught and Widgetplus.

But bottled beers had escaped the march of brewing technology until yesterday. A spokesman for Whitbread said there was growing con-

### WIDGET IN A BOTTLE



sumer interest in bottled ales and surveys had shown that they wanted a draught-style product similar to that enjoyed by fans of cans.

Dr Tony Whiteair, director of research and development at Whitbread in Luton, Bedfordshire, said: "When people look at this device they may not realise there is a lot of technology here. It has taken two years to develop and seven

patents have been applied for." Unlike canned versions, the new widget floats on the surface of the stout, resembling a submarine with a conning tower. When the cap is removed, a reduction in pressure triggers a release of nitrogen gas through a one-way valve on the widget's underside. The device, which is "squeezed" into the bottle, is shaped so that it does not flow out with the stout. As the liquid is poured, the widget floats backward away from the neck rather like a cork in a wine bottle.

Dr Whiteair said that there were significant benefits to having a widget on the surface. He said bottom-loaded devices tended to discharge nitrogen throughout the brew, sometimes causing the "beer to get lively and the contents to overflow". The surface system, by contrast, "feeds nitrogen into the top 10 per cent of the beer and so there is not as much of a problem with overfoaming. The bubbles in the top nucleate bubbles in the rest of it," Dr Whiteair said.

A spokesman for Whitbread said that the stout would cost £1.39 for a pint bottle with the widget representing less than 3 per cent of the cost.

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# McAlpine finds few converts to heretical cause

BY NICHOLAS WOOD, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LORD McALPINE of West Green was finding few takers in Tory circles yesterday for his heretical suggestion that the party would be better off losing the next election and sorting out its differences in opposition.

Ambitious young Tories on the Right of the party appeared in no mood to let Tony Blair wrestle with the cares of office for the next few years. Alan Duncan, MP for Rutland and Melton, said: "It's all very well to go and sit in a cave and purge your body for a month. But if the infidels have taken over the castle in the meantime, it comes at a high price."

Nigel Evans, MP for Ribbles Valley, said he was angered by the remarks of Lord McAlpine, a former Tory party treasurer, reported in the latest edition of *New Statesman* and *Society*. Mr Evans said that with the economy strengthening this was no time to surrender the spoils of many years' tough decision-making to a Labour government.

But privately, leading Tories of an ideological bent confessed that Lord McAlpine's suggestion that the party take a political sabbatical was seductive.

Tory MPs have rarely been more despondent about their chances of keeping their seats as they contemplate unprece-

dent Labour leads in the polls and mutter bitterly about a Government drifting inexorably towards disaster. An air of hopelessness hangs over the parliamentary party as it braces itself for the next blow — a pasting in the May council elections. Many rightwingers seem resigned to their fate — a change of career or a spell in opposition — and some are now wondering if a long-delayed swing of the political pendulum might give them the time and opportunity to form a radical new election-winning ticket for the next century.

As one prominent Tory put it yesterday, if the party could be sure it would be out of office for only four or five years, then come back reinvigorated, there might be something to be said for Lord McAlpine's prescription. But what if Mr Blair consolidated his grip on power and kept the Tories at bay for a decade or more?

The example of the Labour Left in the early 80s, which put political purity before the compromises of office, was hardly encouraging. Even worse, Mr Blair might hand over so much power to Brussels, for instance by signing up for a single currency, that a future Tory government could do little to change the political landscape. A further danger is that the party might veer so

far to the Right as it wanders through the desert that it renders itself unelectable for a generation — the wrong turning from which Labour is only now recovering.

The answer, the Right believes, is again to master "in-flight refuelling", the trick the Government pulled off in the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher as it found a new sense of purpose and unity after the battering of the recession then of the Westland affair.

No mention of the consequences of defeat in right-wing circles is complete without reference to the possibility of ditching Mr Major before the election, but the deadline for a challenge is still eight months away. Speculation about the merits of a Heseltine-Portillo "dream ticket" is growing but has yet to reach the fever pitch of Mr Major's past leadership crises.

Mr Heseltine knows that, at 62, if he is ever to become leader he must take over before the next election. Mr Portillo is 20 years younger. He would clearly be the voice crying in the wilderness and, according to some observers, exhibiting a certain detachment from the Government's travails.

John Patten, page 16  
Leading article, page 17

## Tory party tormentor shows no regrets

By ALICE THOMSON  
POLITICAL REPORTER

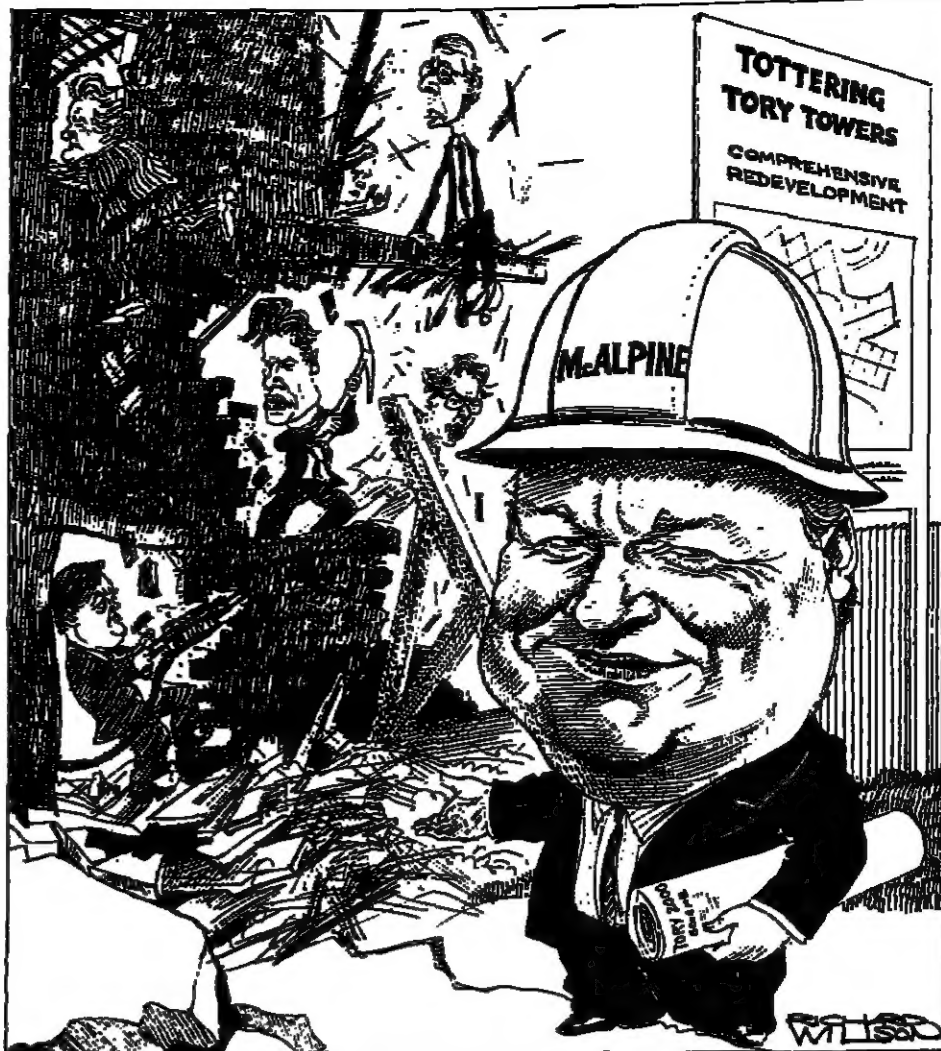
THE fundraising supremo to Margaret Thatcher was revealing yesterday in the pantomime he caused when he accused her successor of "stuffing up a great party".

Lord McAlpine of West Green, who possibly contributed more than anyone to the Tory election successes of the past 15 years, has turned traitor. It all began late on Wednesday when the *New Statesman* and *Society* released a preview of an interview with Lord McAlpine. Instead of plugging his new book, he had used the opportunity to become the first senior Tory to look forward to defeat at the next general election.

Yesterday the 52-year-old construction magnate refused to retract a word. In his customary corduroy suit, cucumber and salmon striped tie and incongruous skin-head haircut, he saturated the airwaves to explain that the party needed a good scrub with a hard brush.

During the 1980s Lord McAlpine charmed cash out of fellow industrialists by means of lavish lunches and armfuls of literature on the loony Left. The first public indications that he was deeply disaffected surfaced three years ago, when he began to be vitriolic about "the distasteful" John Major.

But this was mild stuff compared with his assault



yesterday. He was on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme by 7.30am to announce that the party needed a good cleansing in opposition followed by a John the Baptist figure. An hour later his ruddy face was being smoothed in powder and surrounded by daffodils for Channel 4's *House to House*. By now the Government was worried and Michael Heseltine began to stalk him. Soon Lord McAlpine and

the President of the Board of Trade had moved on to ITN's lunchtime news, then to the BBC's one o'clock news. By Prime Minister's Question Time, Mr Major was obviously riled. Asked about Lord McAlpine's antics he tartly responded: "I understand that Lord McAlpine is promoting a book which is a work of fiction."

By then Lord McAlpine was back at his flat in Bayswater, where he said:

"John Major is the one living in a fantasy world not me. Now is the time for plain talking or this great party will die. They have got to start behaving like decent Tories and stop this appalling drive. I have been thinking along these lines for some time as have many other sensible frustrated Tories but hearing the Chancellor saying we can't expect a return of the feel-good factor has really goaded me."

## Hanley isolated on sleaze claims

By JAMES LANDALE  
POLITICAL REPORTER

JEREMY HANLEY'S campaign against Labour's alleged corruption in local government faltered yesterday when both his deputy and the Prime Minister distanced themselves from his claims.

Although John Major told the Commons there were "no doubt cases of waste, inefficiency and malpractice" in Labour councils, he pointedly avoided the word "corruption", which the party chairman used when he launched the Tory local election campaign on Wednesday.

In a television interview, John Major, deputy party chairman, apologised if Mr Hanley had given the impression that all Labour councillors had their "hand in the till". He said: "That is not what he meant, because it is perfectly clear to me that most Labour councillors do not have their hand in the till. If that is how most people have misunderstood it, then I'm very sorry."

The Prime Minister's remark in the Commons was in reply to a question from David Shaw (C, Dover), who asked whether the "evidence of Labour councillors personally benefiting from fraud, corruption, nepotism and inefficiency" was such that people should be informed about it before the local elections. Mr Major said: "I think it's right that the auditor should investigate and make those matters public."

Frank Dobson, the Shadow Environment Secretary, said Mr Hanley was "beneath contempt". He told BBC Radio: "Everybody knows he is not up to the job. The Labour party is utterly against corruption wherever it arises, wherever there is wrongdoing. Unlike the Tory party, we do something about it."

### IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons questions to Northern Ireland minister and Prime Minister. Debate on Commonwealth Development Corporation Bill, all stages. In the Lords debate on Mental Health (Patients in the Community) Bill and Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (Second Reading). Order.

TODAY in the Commons: from 8.30am, Home Energy Conservation Bill, presented by Deputy Minister of Health, Chris Smith, receives report stage. Civil Rights (Disability-Persons) (Northern Ireland) Bill, opened by the Hon Ian Paisley (DUP, Antrim N) has second reading. The House of Lords is not sitting.

## Disenchanted are wrong to put faith in false god of opposition

The ado of the past two days is largely about nothing, except for the febrile state of Tory morale. Forget all the nonsense about gaffes, the eruptions of a wayward peer and similar trivia. Kenneth Clarke has made a valid, and pertinent, point about the impact of the economic recovery, even though his candour will not do him any political good. The very factors which should make the current upturn sustainable may delay its benefits for many people, and hence limit the "feel-good" factor, and the pay-off for the Tories electorally.

Mr Clarke may have been tactless, and he has certainly annoyed many of his colleagues. But he was

### RIDDELL ON POLITICS

only telling the truth about the constraints which the Government is likely to face in the run-up to the election. His point was the simple one that people are not going to feel more secure and comfortable until the Government has carried on delivering growth for another couple of years at least. At present, there is the virtuous position that the manufacturing sector is healthy with exports rising strongly and investment picking up. But living standards are still being squeezed for most people with interest rates rising again and the final instalment

of tax rises only coming into effect next month.

Even though unemployment is continuing to fall, the pressures of international competition and defence cutbacks are still resulting in redundancies in many sectors, and feeding continuing fears about job prospects. Growth and the probable announcement of income tax cuts this autumn should in time boost living standards and hence raise consumer confidence and optimism. But there is less scope than in the past for a pre-election spending spree, not least because the Bank of England will damp any signs of incipient inflation. That is all Mr Clarke was really saying, as was Michael Heseltine in his

more ebullient export-salesman mode.

The rest is largely froth. Alistair McAlpine's attack on the Major Government — deftly brushed aside by the Prime Minister — is neither surprising nor significant. Lord McAlpine, whose main claim to fame is as a highly successful fundraiser for the Tories, a kind of upper-class enforcer, epitomises the couriers of the Thatcher regime who have become disenchanted with her successor. His complaints reflect wider frustrations, but they are flawed, not least his belief in the purifying effect of opposition. Many of his complaints, about the splits over Europe, the Tory party's financial problems and the poll ratings,

have their origins in the bitter divisions of the late Thatcher era. And he has offered no real alternative.

Many Conservative MPs are in a fatalistic mood, while many ministers are already looking ahead to what jobs they might take after the election. They think their party will be defeated and are flailing around. They have little confidence in the Government's ability to produce solutions and despair of its errors and its inflexible ability to trip into fresh controversies. Hence the familiar talk of a leadership challenge if the Tories do badly in the local elections, though there is no serious evidence for what are so far only the usual murmurings of the discon-

tented — in some cases by MPs who have lost the Tory whip.

Tory MPs could panic after the May elections, though, in the past, the over-publicised threats of mavericks such as Tony Marlow have quickly evaporated. The odds must be that this will happen again. Mr Major would only go if he believed he had lost the confidence of the party. He would relish seeing off any "stalking-horse" candidate. The parallels with the fall of Lady Thatcher are misplaced. At present, Mr Major is — judging by conversations with him — in a confident mood. No one should underestimate his resilience or determination.

PETER RIDDELL

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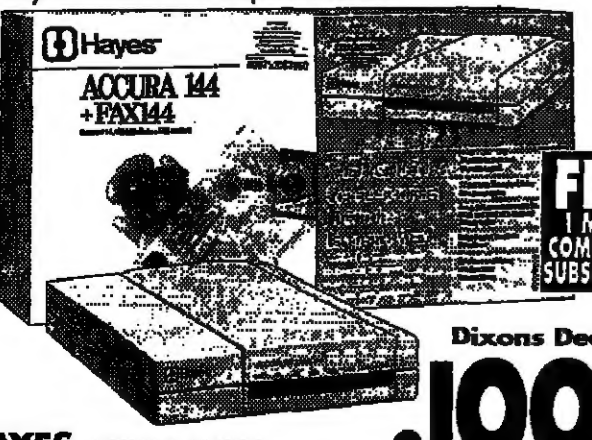
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## Black man who reported car break-in was accused of not being British

# Racial arrest victim wins police damages

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A BLACK Briton who was arrested and questioned about his immigration status after going to police to report a theft won damages from the Metropolitan Police yesterday for false imprisonment and assault.

The man, a London Transport station officer, was accused of lying by a police officer when he said he had been born in Britain and had a British passport. Central London County Court was told. Terry Ajakaiye was then arrested and handcuffed. Police searched his house even after they had found his British passport and birth certificate. He has Nigerian parents but was born in England and had never been in trouble.

Mr Ajakaiye, 29, from south London, was awarded undisclosed damages in an out-of-court settlement of his case, which was the first brought under the Race Relations Act. He alleged that he had been

discriminated against on the grounds of his colour and ethnic origins.

In spite of his victory the legal issue of whether, in law, police come within the category of persons liable to pay damages under the Race Relations Act was not subject to a ruling. Richard Hayward, a recorder at the court, told Mr Ajakaiye: "Thank you for coming. I am sorry you should have suffered this experience."

A Scotland Yard spokesman said last night that no officers had been disciplined over the incident, no CID inquiry would be held and no apology offered.

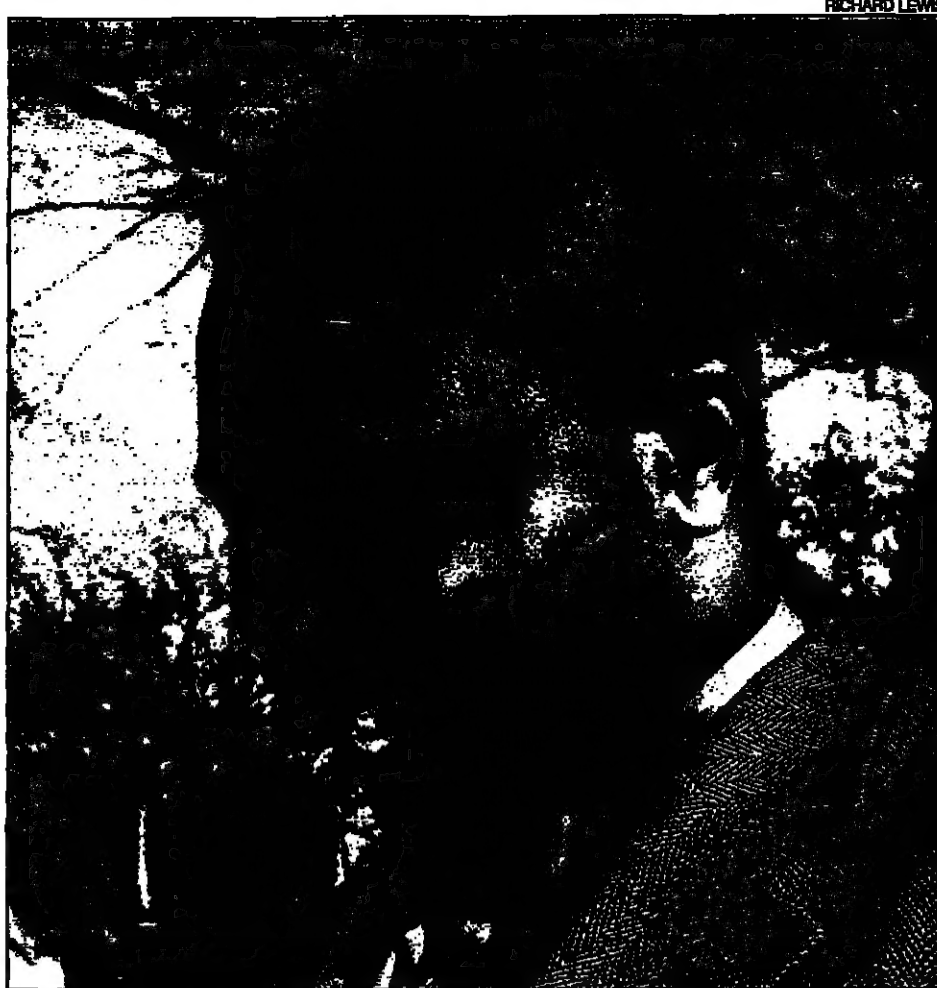
Details of how much damages were awarded to Mr Ajakaiye remain confidential but Cliff Bootham, legal director of the Commission for Racial Equality, estimated they could be £30,000.

Mr Ajakaiye went to Shooters Hill police station in southeast London in 1993 to report that a radio and cassette recorder had been stolen from his fiancée's car.

Jane Deighton, for Mr Ajakaiye, said that a police officer questioned him about his immigration status. The officer then told Mr Ajakaiye he was a liar and was under arrest. When he tried to leave he was surrounded and handcuffed.

He was then taken to Plumstead police station where the custody officer was told that he had been arrested on suspicion of an immigration offence and for assault on a police officer. He was detained at the station for more than three hours even after the police had visited his home and inspected his passport and birth certificate.

Ms Deighton said his upset had been compounded by the police's persistent failure to apologise. Mr Ajakaiye said: "I hope my victory will encourage other black people who have been badly treated to speak out."



Terry Ajakaiye was kept in custody even after police found his birth certificate

## Officers welcome DNA database

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE world's first DNA database for criminals will be operational within weeks, chief constables were told yesterday.

In its first year the database at Birmingham, established with a grant of £4 million from the Home Office, is expected to receive samples from 135,000 burglary, serious assault and sex crime suspects. Within five years it could be widened to hold details of all offenders. Police and politicians believe it will improve the justice process, save time and money and sharply increase conviction rates.

Final details of the database and its use from April 10 were outlined yesterday at the spring seminar of the Association of Chief Police Officers at the police college at Bramshill, Hampshire.

John Hoddinott, Chief Constable of Hampshire and president of the Acpo, said DNA records would be used to compare scientific evidence taken from different scenes of crime as well as identifying individuals involved. He said greater use of DNA samples had been made possible by

the Criminal Justice Act, which allows police to take mouth swabs by force or to use hairstrands.

Ben Gunn, Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire and head of a police working party on the DNA project, said it would cost forces about £5.4 million in the next year to take the first samples. Eventually a total of 675,000 suspects would be logged on the database. He emphasised that DNA profiling could clear a suspect as well as leading to conviction.

The eventual aim is to take a sample from every suspect charged or held for an offence that would carry a prison sentence.

Detective Chief Superintendent Bill Grahamslaw, a Scotland Yard detective working on the project, said: "We are on the brink of something like police officers faced a hundred years ago with fingerprints." He said a fingerprint could show that someone was at the scene of a crime, even if it did not prove they had committed it. DNA samples could sometimes show the person did commit the crime.

## Best buys to choose in salad bargains

BY NICOLA TYRRELL

FRUIT and salad bargains are plentiful. Cape plums are 70p to 95p a lb, and Cape Bon Cretian pears are 45p to 68p a lb. William pears are 49p a lb at Waitrose. For fresh fruit salads, black seedless grapes are 70p a lb at Sainsbury's and black seeded 59p a lb at Asda. Spanish strawberries are 79p for an 8oz punnet at Asda and Safeway. Also at Safeway, pineapples are 69p and organic oranges 79p for five. Asda cucumbers are 35p each. Waitrose curly lettuce are 45p and Tesco Little Gem lettuce

69p for a twin-pack. Baby corn is 69p for 115g at Sainsbury's and £1.59 for 250g at Waitrose. Mixed vegetable stir-fry is 79p a pack and four Dalepack vegetable grills are 69p at Sainsbury's, while Sainsbury's vegetable lasagne is £1.29 for 510g. Tesco healthy eating cheese cake is on offer at £1.49. Shape yoghurts are £2.19 for a 12-pack at Sainsbury's and £1.59 a litre at Sainsbury's.

Meat bargains include shoulder of British lamb, 1.39 a lb at Safeway; British beef rump steak, 3.18 a lb at Asda; and British pork loin steaks, 1.88 a lb at Sainsbury's. In wines, Sainsbury's Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon 75cl is £2.49. Tesco Bucks Fizz

75cl is £1.69 and its Australian dry white wine 75cl is £2.69.

Other advertised best buys: Asda: pepperoni pizza, £1.09; 255g Young's Ocean Pie, 99p; pork rolled shoulder, 95p a lb. Budegens: Bachelors delicately flavoured rice, 69p for 220g; McVities Jaffa Cakes, £1.19 for 3 packs of 12.

Co-op: Heinz Weight Watchers chicken korma (325g) £1.89; apple strudel (600g) 99p. Harrods: rainbow trout, £4 per kg; chicken *pâté en croûte*, £1.95 per 100g; whole Rob-lochon cheese, £9.20.

Iceland: gateaux (3 varieties), £1.29 for 6 portions; Iceland prawns, £1.99 for 289g.

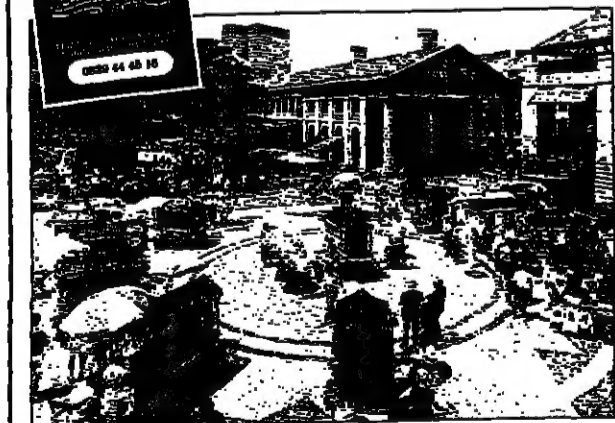
Marks & Spencer: lemon sole goujons, £2.99 for 9oz; white chocolate marie, £1.99; 1kg Belgian biscuits, £5.99. Safeway: chicken passanda, £1.49 for 340g; British beef fillet steak, £6.68 a lb.

Sainsbury's: IS chocolate cake, £2.98 for 178g; IS garlic bread, 59p; IS chocolate fudge cheesecake, £1.48. Sainsbury's: Olivite reduced fat spread 39p for 250g; ruby red oranges 79p a kg.

Tesco: English mature cheddar, £2.04 a lb; 12 all-butter mini croissants, 99p. Waitrose: spinach and cheese flan £1.25 for 360g; fresh chicken, £4.99 for 5lb.

## THE TIMES Don't forget your passport

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Peacekeepers pinned down by artillery barrage in eastern Bosnian enclave of Goradze

## Attacks by Serbs prompt UN forces to review patrols

FROM JOEL BRAND IN ZAGREB AND MISHA GLENNY

BRITISH United Nations troops in the eastern Bosnian enclave of Goradze are reviewing their patrols after an attack by Serb troops.

The scope for change is limited, however. A foot patrol of 12 men was involved in a battle with Serb troops in the north of the Goradze enclave on Wednesday. Three of the soldiers were pinned down for four hours by heavy Serb fire. A quick-reaction force team in an armoured vehicle was deployed and fired on by Serbs.

The attack took place in a region where the United Nations had not sent patrols for about six months. At about 3pm, Bosnian Serbs pinned down the British patrol using small arms, heavy machine-guns and anti-aircraft guns. Half the patrol withdrew, but it was not until 7pm that the rest were recovered. In all, the British returned 500 rounds. When approaching their base, the patrol was attacked again this time by Serb and Bosnian government forces.

At the weekend another British patrol was engaged by Serb forces and pinned down for several hours. The peacekeepers returned 700 rounds in that incident before extricating themselves.

In another development Bosnian Croat leaders said yesterday that they would freeze all official contacts with their Bosnian government allies until the fate of General Vlado Santic, a Croat officer

kidnapped in Bihac by Muslim soldiers, was known.

The Bosnian Croat presidential committee also demanded the replacement of General Asif Dudakovic, commander of the mainly Muslim government army in the northwest Bosnian enclave, the Croatian news agency Hina reported. The committee accused General Dudakovic of ordering the abduction of General Santic, commander of the Bosnian Croat militia (HVO) fighting alongside government forces in Bihac. He disappeared on March 8.

In Goradze and two other eastern "safe areas" the Bosnian Serbs have been stopping fuel shipments to peacekeepers. Already the British are using a small hydro-electric generator to power their radios and have been forced to mostly abandon their petrol-starved armoured vehicles in favour of foot patrols. By the start of next week they expect to begin supplying many of their observation posts with mules.

Nato warplanes flew low over the area for most of the afternoon during Wednesday's attack but were not called upon to attack the Serb gun positions. The UN command in Goradze had given the Serbs advance notice of the patrol's route in the hope of avoiding such incidents. Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward, a UN spokesman in Sarajevo, suggested that the Serbs had

used the prior notice to set up the cannon and arrange an ambush.

Twenty minutes after the British peacekeepers came under fire, the local Serb commander of the Rogadica Brigade told a UN liaison officer he did not want peacekeepers in that area; his men were deliberately aiming at the patrol and would not stop firing.

When asked why the Nato warplanes were not asked to destroy a weapon that was violating the alliance's exclusion zone around Goradze and being directed against the UN troops, Colonel Coward maintained that the UN's policy was not to "escalate" such incidents.



New Zealand troops perform traditional Maori dances on the tarmac at Split airport in Croatia in the former Yugoslavia. They join United Nations peacekeepers in the Balkans just as the region braces itself for an expected surge in fighting in the next few weeks



Dini: result is 'victory for common sense'

### Dini wins crucial vote on budget

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

LAMBERTO DINI, the Italian Prime Minister, narrowly won a vote of confidence on his mini-budget in parliament yesterday, inflicting a humiliating defeat on Silvio Berlusconi, his predecessor, and Gianfranco Fini, the "post-Fascist" leader.

Deputies in the Lower House voted by 315 to 309, with one abstention, to sweep away amendments threatening the 12,000 billion lire (£4.6 billion) package and save the two-month-old technocrat Government from resignation. "This is a victory for common sense," Signor Dini said.

A second vote a short time later approved by 315-303 the entire package, designed to contain the country's 1995 public spending deficit at 138,600 billion lire.

For Signor Berlusconi, a media tycoon, the vote was a double setback.

Not only did his plan to precipitate a snap general election by toppling the Government fail, but the drama also did considerable damage to the economy and his Fininvest company by pushing down the lira to a record low of 1228 to the mark yesterday and depressing share prices. The prospect of an election in June has now receded.

### Britain delighted by treaty caution

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

A STRIKINGLY cautious assessment of the Maastricht Treaty circulated by France to European Union governments this week suggests that demands for a radical overhaul of the treaty next year are already being toned down.

The draft document, which may well be changed before EU ministers endorse it in the early summer, will gratify the British Government and is likely to infuriate countries such as Germany and Belgium, whose governments are committed to deeper changes in the EU system.

Written by France, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, the document is scornful of the European Parliament's performance and claims for greater powers. The authors hint that the mixture of integrated and inter-governmental decision-making created by Maastricht should stay in place. That system, which splits the Union into three "pillars", was designed by French officials in 1991 and is keenly supported by Britain. British officials were doing their best last night to suppress their delight at the document's contents and were emphasising that several bruising rounds of debate lay before EU ambassadors over the coming weeks. "The important thing is that the report should do what we all agreed: provide a source of information about how the treaty has worked and not start the debate about what should happen next before time," one said. A Belgian diplomat said that his Government had not had a chance to assess the report, but recalled that his ministers were critical of the way the Maastricht system was working.

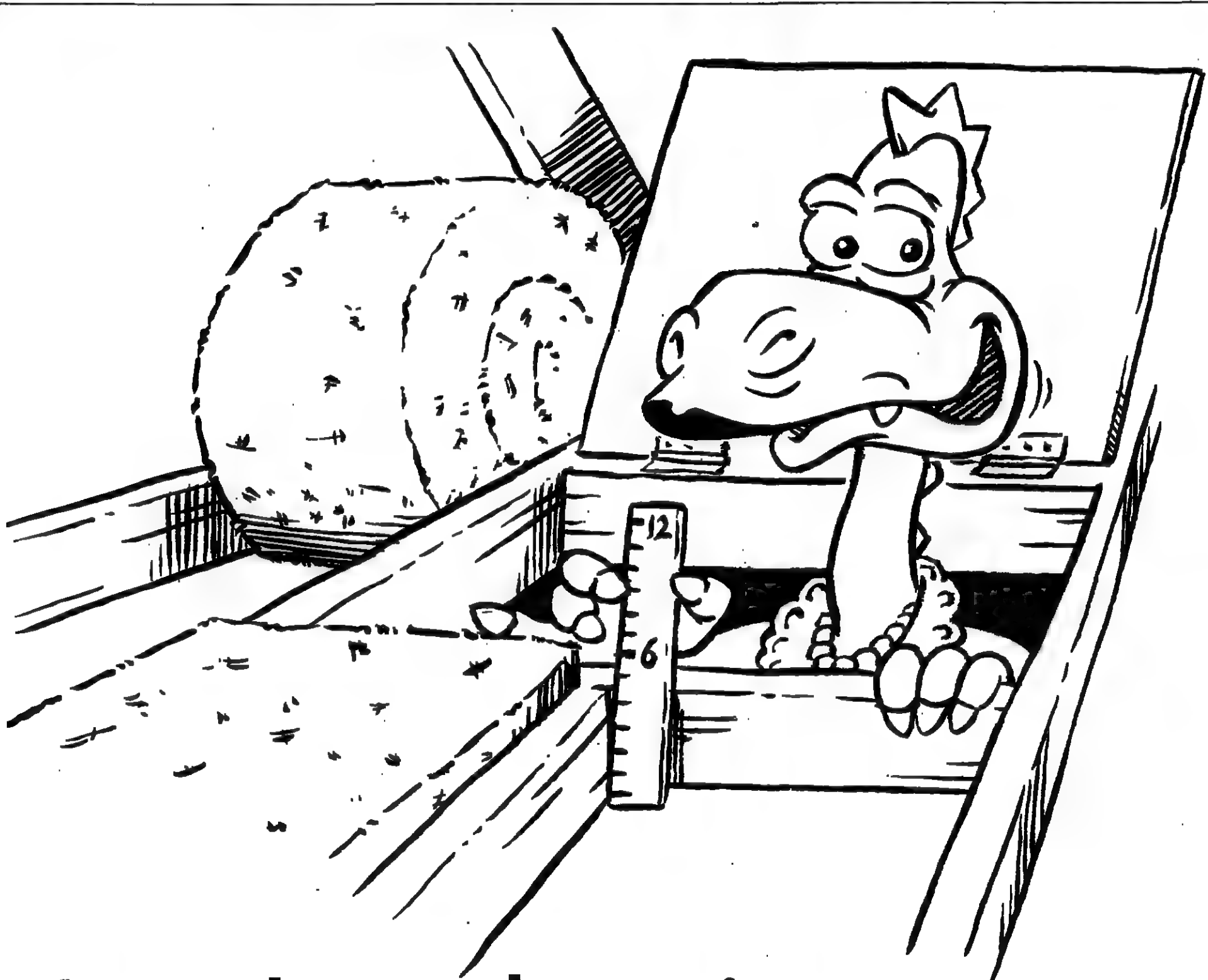
The report will be one of the more important documents due to be digested by a study group of junior ministers and MEPs which starts work in June on the agenda for the treaty review conference.

### Left divided on EU

Strasbourg: The socialist faction in the European Parliament has failed to endorse a blueprint for next year's inter-governmental conference to reform the EU's institutions (Wolfgang Münchau writes).

The agenda for the conference next year has become a subject of heated debate inside the European Parliament, which is drawing up a series of proposals for further European integration, stronger institutions, and simplified

decision-making. A vote on the socialist plan, calling for greater powers for the Parliament and more majority voting in the Council of Ministers, had to be postponed after a flurry of amendments. The paper, drafted by Pauline Green, the British leader of the socialist faction, is an attempt to bridge the federalist aspirations of some continental MEPs, and the generally more cautious views of Labour members.



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## Aid cuts threaten starvation for Rwanda refugees

BY EVE-ANN PRENTICE, DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

MORE than two million refugees from Rwanda — mostly women and children — face imminent starvation because the United Nations and aid agencies are running out of food and money to help them.

Part of the problem has arisen because some donor countries believe the refugees should return home and not be encouraged to stay in camps in Zaire, Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda. However 85 to 90 per cent of the refugees now facing famine are women and children, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and not Hutu men accused of carrying out atrocities in Rwanda before being defeated and driven into exile last year.

"The interest of the big donors is diminishing, but the vast majority of the refugees are women and children, they are not murderers," said Sylvana Foa of the UNHCR. "Between April and September we have no pledges of aid and we need \$60 million (£37 million) immediately. It really is a terrible situation, made worse because there has been a drought in the region and less food is available locally," Ms Foa said.

The UN World Food Programme has given a warning of "dramatic food shortages" and asked for \$385 million to feed the refugees, but so far only \$155 million has been pledged. Pierre Salilez of the World Food Programme said at Goma camp in Zaire: "The

people feel we are cutting food rations to force them back to Rwanda, but there are just no funds."

Food rations at many camps have already been halved and stocks held by the World Food Programme will be exhausted in two weeks, according to Oxfam and Save the Children.

"There is now a real fear that without a major injection of cash and food, the crisis will affect every refugee and displaced person within the region," they said. About half the refugees are children, and up to 40 per cent are women, with one man acting as head of a family of up to ten, the UNHCR and Christian Aid said yesterday.

There are two million refugees in camps outside Rwanda and one million displaced people within the country. The two British aid agencies believe the situation is particularly serious for the 650,000 Rwandan refugees in Tanzania. "The refugees already perceive the food crisis as a deliberate attempt by the international community to starve them into returning home to Rwanda," Oxfam and Save the Children said. They added that a famine would lead to even worse violence in the Central African countries hosting the refugees, and scupper attempts to return them to their homes.

Food rations in camps around Goma have been halved and in some instances cut by two-thirds, other relief

officials said this week. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said that the daily food ration of 1,900 calories a person, required under the standards of the UNHCR, has in some camps fallen to 600 calories a day.

The refugees poured into Zaire last July after the Hutu government army was defeated by the Rwanda Patriotic Front dominated by the Tutsi minority. Pro-government Hutus had orchestrated the genocide of between 500,000 and one million Tutsis and allied Hutus in Rwanda.

"The tension is mounting again," said Nina Nobel, a Swedish aid worker who says she has been threatened at the Kibumba camp near Goma.

At the current rate of repatriation from camps in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, the world's biggest refugee crisis, now eight months old, will drag on into the next century.



A street vendor in Peking offers what he calls a fossilised dinosaur egg for sale. Chinese scientists claimed yesterday that they had extracted the genetic material DNA from a dinosaur egg 70 million years old (Nigel Hawkes writes). A team led by Professor Chen Zhanliang of Peking University isolated the

### Chinese claim to extract DNA from dinosaur egg

DNA from organic substances found on the inner surface of a dinosaur egg late last year in a study reminiscent of the film *Jurassic Park*.

softish centre and the collector approached the Hunan government. Palaeontologists found the DNA in a "cotton-like" area on the inner surface of the egg. Professor Zhou Zhenquan of the university said. Until the DNA sequences are published, however, western scientists are likely to remain sceptical.

### Burmese exiles play down releases

FROM REUTERS IN BANGKOK

THE Burmese Government's sudden release of two top political prisoners is a gesture designed to counter bad publicity from its military crackdown on ethnic minorities, exiles said yesterday.

State-run television showed the leading dissidents, U Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung, walking out of Insein Prison in Rangoon into the arms of waiting relatives on Wednesday, but their release highlighted the continuing house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

"If they are sincere, they should release Aung San Suu Kyi and all the other political prisoners as well. In our view this is just propaganda to improve their tarnished image abroad," a spokesman for the exiled National Coalition Government of Burma said.

A total of 31 political prisoners were released. The 29 others were set free from three prisons in Mandalay, Toun-goo and Tharawaddy.



Freeman: change of policy on arms sales

### Britain to lease Tornados to UAE

BY MICHAEL EVANS  
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN is on the point of signing an agreement, perhaps as early as next week, to lease 12 Tornado ground-attack aircraft to the United Arab Emirates. The deal forms part of a new defence pact with the Gulf state.

Although the UAE has not asked for air crews to fly the jets, Royal Air Force personnel are expected to be detached as instructors. The UAE Air Force at present flies French Mirage 2000s and British Hawks.

The Tornado-leasing breakthrough represents the start of a new British drive to increase arms sales in the Middle East against growing competition from America and France. Roger Freeman, the Minister for Defence Procurement, leaves today for Abu Dhabi at the head of a delegation of defence industry officials. They are to attend an international defence exhibition there starting on Sunday.

Yesterday Mr Freeman said Britain was negotiating a more formal defence relationship with the UAE leading to joint exercises, exchanges of intelligence and arrangements covering Britain's response if there were a threat to the UAE's security. A similar pact was signed with Kuwait last year.

As part of a recently formed defence-sales strategy, Britain is to follow competitors in the arms market by backing only one company's product for future export bids. Mr Freeman said that, under the Government's competitive policy, several companies had often bid at the same time for foreign contracts. This, he believed, had confused potential customers.

In future, he said, a decision would be made on which British company to support. After that, the Government, the Ministry of Defence, defence sales organisation, defence attachés and diplomats would do everything they could to promote the chosen company's chances of winning the deal.

### Nigerian arrests attacked

London: Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, yesterday condemned a wave of arrests in Nigeria, saying they constituted a serious turn for the worse in the country's drift to a self-inflicted tragedy (Michael Binyon writes).

Chief Anyaoku, himself a former Nigerian foreign minister, said international disapproval had been heightened by the detention of General Abacha, who was widely known as the only Nigerian head of state to have relinquished power voluntarily and returned the country to a democratically elected government. His comments echo strong American criticism of the arrests.

General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military ruler, yesterday named his new Cabinet, more than five weeks after he dissolved the previous body.

### Satellite bust

Istanbul: Four drug smugglers were jailed for 30 years each after US agents tracked their ship by satellite 3,000 miles from Pakistan to the Mediterranean with £244 million of heroin. (Reuters)

### Fishing 'victory'

Ottawa: Canada claimed victory in its war with Europe over dwindling fish stocks as Spanish fishing vessels remained outside the disputed fishing ground. (Reuters)

Letters, page 17

### Watch this space

Moscow: Norman Thagard, the first American astronaut to fly in a Russian rocket, joined the orbiting Mir space station for a 90-day space mission which will set a new US endurance record. (Reuters)

### Rabbani offer

Islamabad: President Rabbani of Afghanistan said he was willing to resign, but he would not commit himself to a UN-proposed transfer of power to an interim council on March 21. (Reuters)

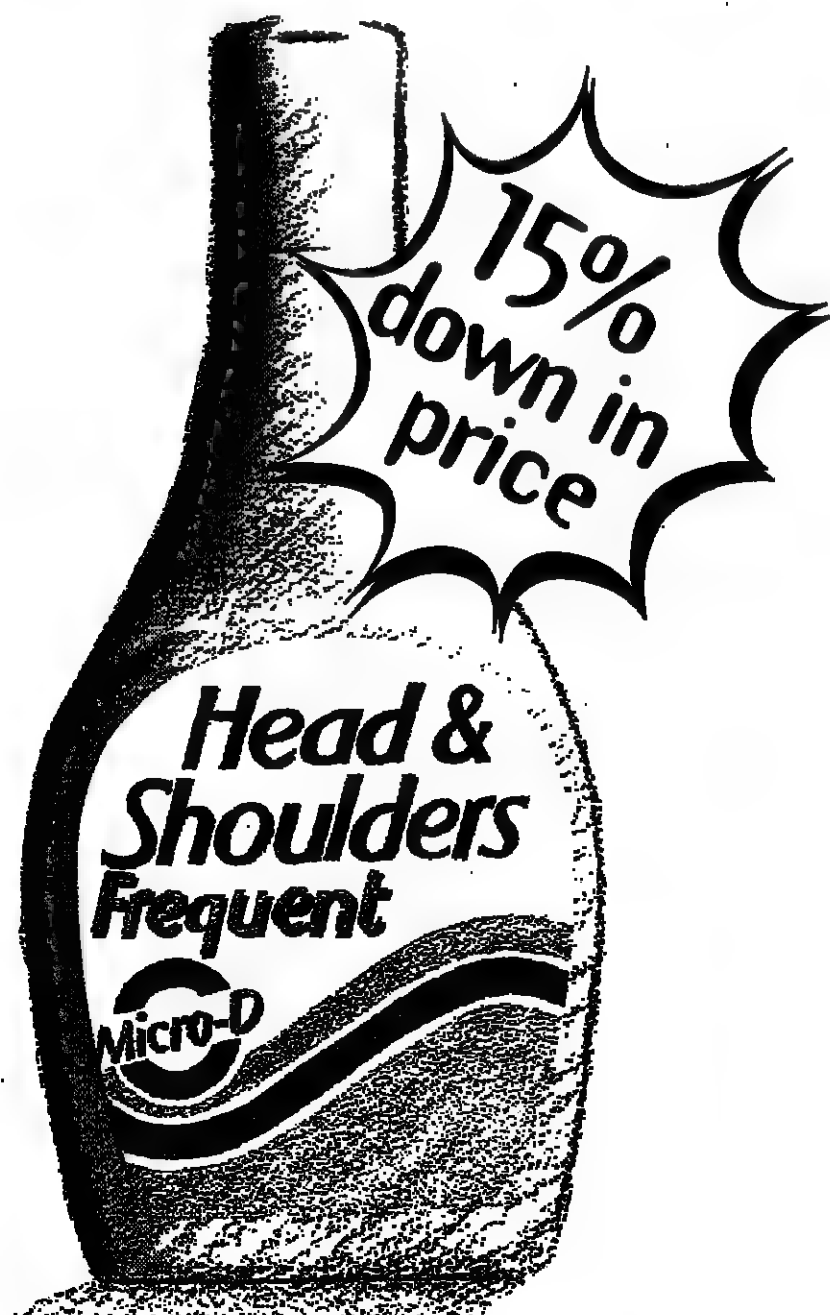
### Vatican support

Rome: Sanctions must not be used to punish a people, the Vatican said after Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister who has been lobbying governments for an end to UN sanctions, met the Pope. (AP)

### Museum piece

Peking: China has retired its last escort warship armed with cannon to a museum, completing the switch to more modern missile-equipped vessels, the Liberation Army Daily said. (Reuters)

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At 70 Lauren Bacall is still tough enough to deal with pompous, condescending and sarcastic editors

# How to eat an interviewer for breakfast

The scene could have been scripted by Hemingway. Lauren Bacall was lunching with bespectacled Martyn Harris from *The Daily Telegraph* when the scene turned ugly. Bacall: "You know I really don't like your tone, mister. You have a hell of a nerve," whereupon he upped and marched out to write a candid piece ("It is Betty Perske's bottom I would like to boot as I leave San Lorenzo") about what happened when he met his "teenage lust-object".

OK, Miss Bacall (née Betty Perske) is a woman of a certain age who everyone assumes could eat a hapless hack for breakfast. "It was clear from the start that this was an unhappy guy. I tried a joke and that didn't work. He was totally hostile, trying to goad me into a negative response." She was ruffled enough to telephone his Editor, Max Hastings, and was astonished to receive a reply she found even more insulting than the interviewer's questions.

"He's sent me a pompous, condescending, sarcastic letter saying: 'You Hollywood people expect us to worship at your shrine. You would rather have somebody from *Hello!* magazine'. How the hell does he know? He adds gratuitously: 'We have for a long time been reviled by the sycophantic attitude of San Lorenzo to Hollywood.' And: 'The only time you people ever give interviews is when you want to promote something.' Well, buster, you don't ask us at other times."

She shrugs off this contretemps along with her coat, her chewing gum and her Marks & Spencer bag (she has just been shopping for a brace of plain white linen shirts: "I never buy just one of anything") to pour the tea.

What Bacall has just encountered is that British speciality, the sadistic interview of the "Call yourself a movie-star? Let me tell you how screwed up you are" hatchet-job school which enjoyed a vogue in the 1980s. "But I did not provoke it. It was not my bad day. I have a lot of faults, but I am actually very easy to get along with," she says, laughing her throaty laugh. "I'm not here to get into confrontations and listen to him insult my mother."

As she says: "Stardom isn't

a profession; it's an accident. And after the accident happens it is fuelled by people like us: nobody makes us write about them. Fame is no protection against human insecurity, humdrum misery, natural disasters. Life pricks them and they bleed. Above all, they can't lick terminal illness and death, with which Bacall's life is punctuated. "So many memorial services. And terror-filled waits in hospitals. You never get used to it. That old

## THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



saw that time heals just doesn't wash. All the more reason not to waste your energy on garbage," she says. Miss Bacall flicks her fair hair with insouciance. She looks terrific: feline eyes, cheekbones, wide mouth — still the Slim of *To Have And Have Not*, 50 years ago. You have to keep in shape to look this good at 70. She works out, when in New York, with one Martha Coopersmith who comes twice a week. "I got her from Nora Ephron. She said, 'I'm giving you this present: have her once and you'll always want her in your life.' And she was right."

She has written a wise, honest, woman's book — hence her being on the interview circuit — about mid-life and ageing. She writes of the empty nest, after years of worrying how she could work and leave her three children. (David Merrick refused to give her a day off from *Cactus Flower* to attend her son Steve's graduation, then relented and let her miss just one matinee. "The guy was all heart," she writes wryly.) Of losing a dog that slept on her pillow. Of creating a beautiful house and garden at Amagansett on Long Island — she wanted an English country

garden "like Sidney Bernstein's" — which became a nightmare (dead trees and plants, viscous soil everywhere when a raccoon got lodged in the chimney, leaky pipes, "days on which everything seemed a chore"). Of deciding to sell the house ("anyway, a woman alone has no business owning two establishments") only to find that her children didn't want her precious collections of Delft, pewter, brass, majolica, "chickadees".

She raised her three children mostly alone and they have grown up remarkably normal. What is even more refreshing in a Hollywood actress, Bacall never resorted to an analyst. "I've always known clearly what my problems are. I don't have to have anyone tell me what the lacks and positives and negatives in my life are. You have to pull yourself together and that is what I have done."

At the wedding of her daughter (a nurse and yoga therapist) she found it tough to be mother and father of the bride: how different it would have been if Bogle had still been around. "That's when being on your own hits you." After that last wedding, she found herself feeling angry and lost. "I thought this dependence on my children would never happen to me. How could it? After all I am a working woman, an independent woman. I have a multitude of interests. So imagine my shock when I realised, at 65, that the final truth is: I live alone. I need a reason for all I do." That reason is her children. "Imagine if I hadn't had children! What on earth would I have done?"

She tries not to call them too often: "Who wants to hear from their mother all the time? That's fair enough. I didn't want to hear from my mother when I was alone, either. But I wanted her to be there when I called her."

The woman who first slouched across the screen saying "Anybody got a match?" removes the ashtray from our table. She has watched so many die, seen the ravages of cancer and emphysema: Bogle, John Wayne, John Huston. When Lenny Bernstein's wife, Felicia, was dying of cancer she begged



Lauren Bacall gets tired of being asked to repeat her "whistle" line — "I cannot only be connected with Bogle"

Lenny to give up smoking. So Bernstein, Bacall and Patrick O'Neal went to Smokey and embarked on the rigid step-by-step programme ("Week three: you drop the butts into a jar of water and watch it turn black, like your lungs"). But it didn't stop Lenny or Patrick, now both dead. Bacall gave up finally nine years ago while playing in *Sweet Bird of Youth* in Australia. "I did it one day at a time," she says.

"The time I miss it most is when I'm in Paris, sitting alone in the Café Flore, after breakfast, reading the *Herald Tribune*. She has found no fidget-substitutes: "I don't paint or draw or knit or do needlepoint." But she is alive.

No wonder actors are tough. She writes vividly of the exhilaration of applause, the terror of the footlights and the nightmare when the laughs fail to come and your voice hangs in mid-air. "Putting your life on the line eight times a week is not for the meek and mild," as she says. And at the end of a

show's run, the sinking heart: "Where shall I go? My life is a disaster. Will I ever be on stage again?" She has had to audition for parts in movies she has played on stage, and seen them given to someone else. "Is it any wonder paranoia plays a part in my life? I sink so easily."

Since her months last year filming *Prêt-à-Porter* in Paris ("city of my heart") she has been travelling non-stop: "Suitcases. Hotels. Airports. I wouldn't want to live anywhere all of the time. I'm a restless person." She will be back in England this summer doing a Dürrenmatt play at

Chichester. She finds it incongruous that people work like dogs, longing only to retire. "I dare say more than half the population are unhappy in their work. But I cannot comprehend choosing to retire. Why do we Americans yearn for vacations instead of fulfilment?" When resting, she gives lectures on "working women". Tomorrow she gets back to the Manhattan apartment with more rooms than she needs, to see friends like the Arthur Schlessingers and the Alistair Cookes and the Hal Princes and Sondheims, whose song *I'm Still Here* could be her signature tune.

Her signature line, written by Hemingway with help from William Faulkner, was heard again the other night at the National Theatre, when she was in conversation with Dirk Bogarde (watched by the Pinters, who took her to dinner afterwards). Someone in the audience asked her to say it again. In the husky, understated voice: "If you want me, just whistle. You know how to whistle, don't you, Steve? You just put your lips together... and blow." She gets sick of being asked, but what can she do? A new generation hears it for the first time, and the oldies want to hear it from the horse's mouth. "Oh, I understand that. It will never go away. But what I don't like is the feeling that the rest of my life has gone for nothing. I have not set in a darkened room for 37 years. I've done some good stuff. I've lived a life. I cannot only be connected with Bogle."

"But that was past. This is now." (That's the title of her book: *Now*.) "Listen, I'm very aware of how lucky I've been, to stay with my career. I'm a professional. I wouldn't have it any other way. My personal life has not gone so well."

Strangers may shout "Lauren!" in the street, grab her by the sleeve, ask to take her picture, but what about love? "I want to have somebody's hand to hold. I want to have somebody to laugh with..." she says on page 211. "To be in love and to share laughter with a man is the best combination."

"I don't say I'm looking," she says. "I like many things about living alone. I sleep when I choose and wake when I choose. But the interesting thing about life is, you never know what's about to happen."

● *Now* (Century, £16.99)

## My false tribute to Hardy

Oh, the shame of it. Having basked for years in the glory reflected from the front of our house by the blue plaque with Thomas Hardy's name on it, I have just discovered that the thing is unauthorised. To think that you belong to the most select club in London, and then to find that you're in under false pretences... it was the spiky little quarrel now in train between the very different fan clubs of George Frederick Handel and Jini Hendrix that prompted me to check with the blue plaque committee of English Heritage, and now I wish I'd never asked.

English Heritage and the champions of Mr Purple Haze want a plaque on No 23 Brook Street in Mayfair, where Hendrix once lived. There is a Hendrix commemorative Han-plaque next door at No 25, and Stanley Sadie who, as chair-Trust, wants to open a Handel Museum occupying both houses, objects. Forget Poets' Corner, the *Dictionary of National Biography* and *Grove's Dictionary of Music* (in whose American edition Mr Sadie himself included a long entry on Hendrix): a blue London plaque is the

Blue is the colour of glory in London — unless, of course, it's a fake

only memorial that counts. The Handel camp says a Hendrix plaque would be inappropriate because he was more famous in America, but the Hendrix camp naturally accused the other lot of mere snobbery. Speaking as a plaque snob myself, I say let Hendrix have it. At least the "well-informed passer-by", as the English Heritage rubric has it, will stop and say: "Well, I never knew he lived there."

This is more, I think, than can be said for Michael Balfe, Sir Julius Benedict and even of Frank Bridge, three English names that have made it into the list of 29 in the music and dance category. Most of those — like Chopin, Mozart, Clementi and Handel himself — are satisfactorily famous, but one must add that they are all at least as foreign as Hendrix. It has taken a succession of learned committees of the Royal Society of Arts, the LCC, the GLC

and now English Heritage more than 130 years to reach a grand total of 620 men and women who, apart from being regarded as eminent, exceptional, outstanding and so on, in more or less any field of human endeavour, happened to hang their hats for a while at some London address.

They wait 20 years before plaquing anyone, mindful of what Andy Warhol said about fame being a funny thing, but they pick some rum ones on occasion just the same.

The trouble they go to is impressive, though. When I asked Andrew Saint at English Heritage about our Hardy plaque, he fished out an enormous file dating back to Hardy's death in 1928. One George H. Cook, lecturer in appreciation of architecture and the history of London, was the first proposer. And the pity is that he lit on the house in Tooting that Hardy's wife bullied him into renting. (Both Hardys came to hate that house.)

The correspondence piled up through the years until 1938, when the committee was still dithering, and it didn't get around to putting up the plaque until March 1940. The rule is only one plaque per notable, so when Evelyn Hardy began campaigning for a plaque on our house in the Seventies she was turned down. Somebody went ahead and did it anyway, in 1973, with an imitation that certainly fooled me when I got there in 1982.

I like to imagine it was Evelyn Hardy herself who put up that rogue plaque. Having

by then written four books on Hardy she knew the Bayswater house was of much more account in his life than the Tooting one. It was in our house that he did little sketches from the bathroom window while mooning over Eliza Bright Nicholls, the Dorset coastguard's daughter who was in service round the corner in Orsett Terrace, and wrote her those glorious poems that, years later, he implied had actually been written to the tiresome Emma.

Excuse me carping, therefore, but I see from the *Blue Plaque Guide* that Virginia Woolf managed to break the rule and sneak in twice, once as Woolf (on Hogarth House in Richmond, where she and Leonard founded the Hogarth Press) and once as Stephen in Fitzroy Square. Her father Leslie got in too. A touch of overkill, I'd say. There are other anomalies: why did they ban Ezra Pound on account of his being a Fascist, but include that proto-Bolshevik Alexander Herzen?

Blue plaques appear to exert a fascination even over the plaque-worship themselves. Apparently Sylvia Plath picked her house in Primrose Hill partly because it had a plaque to Yeats, and it may be that J.B. Priestley chose his house in Highgate because Coleridge had lived there. Finding myself unauthorised, however, I prefer the attitude of the essayist Charles Lamb, whose shade, I am sure, wastes no time haunting the house behind Lamb's blue plaque in Dunstan Terrace, Islington:

Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart  
Just as the whim bites. For my part,  
I do not care a farthing  
For either of them, or for Handel.



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# Why the Tories live by power

Ideas do not flourish in the wilderness, says John Patten

Lord McAlpine's answer to the examination question "For the Tories, thinking is incompatible with governing" is clearly Yes. Poly-math, splendid writer — a sort of thinking man's Alan Clark — and someone who has done more than most for the Conservative Party in postwar years, he is however wrong on this.

Apart from the uncomfortable thought that a period in opposition enjoying a course of political RRT is not necessarily going to be short — Labour had one 14-year stretch in the 1950s and 1960s, and is just about to enter year 17 of its present electoral sentence — the record shows that since 1974 much of the best of Tory thinking has been done in the saddle.

Nowhere else in the democratic world has one party had such a grip on a nation's life for so long. We have usually let that grip slip when we stopped thinking in government. The Tories are the natural party of government — 200 years of political history shows that — and generally we have done our best thinking in government.

There is no guarantee that opposition bestows self-generated political renewal. After 16 long years, Labour has paid us the ultimate political compliment of erecting its whole political platform on our foundations. If I had been told in the early 1980s that ten years later a Labour leader was to send his child to a grant-maintained school, I would have said that was about as likely as Mrs Thatcher applying to join the NUM. That is, if I had known then what a grant-maintained school was. The point is, they were not then even in the delivery suite.

Here is one example of the truth of the matter, for much of Tory education as well as other policy has been developed in government since 1979. It was not worked out according to a master plan thought up by Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph while locked in a room with Sir Alfred Sherman and other great thinkers of the early Tory years. Indeed, the case is that not very much happened visibly to Tory education policy until the mid-1980s. Keith Joseph was instead, as a Cabinet minister, not just clearing site-lines through the educational forest but thinking as well. So it was not until eight years after we left opposition that with considerable verve the 1988 Education Reform Act was born. Mr Baker's Act is quite as important as Mr Butler's Act ever was. It was a creation of government. And it now apparently forms the basis of Labour's education policy as well as ours.

The opposition years were vital for capitalising on the nation's mood of disenchantment with a Labour Government which wilfully stopped thinking between 1974 and 1979. Those years were also good for refining the party's war chests as the Jaguars of brilliantly successful treasurers like Alistair McAlpine

purred off from Smith Square Citywards on arm-twisting expeditions. All the thinking which did go on certainly created a change in the mood music of Toryism. But the 1979 election manifesto was no detailed script for the political things to come.

It was the same with privatisation, that brilliant British idea which is sweeping the globe, admired in each hemisphere, transforming post-communist economies, and helping developing countries to develop. The concept was the fruit of some deep thought in the opposition years. But after 1979 it not only took off, it also took shape in government. Some of the techniques of privatisation were invented ingeniously on the hoof, surprising not only the enemy but the Tory party as well.

Just as the view was that the State had become too big and was crowding out the private sector, leading to the birth of privatisation, so it was also clear in the Tory opposition years that the trade unions' grip around the economic throat of the nation was far too tight. But everyone in 1978 and 1979 knew that "something had to be done" about those troublesome industrial high priests — especially Mr Callaghan and his Labour Government. The step-by-step policy of trade union reform which bestowed freedom on their members and the right to manage on managers was however, again, a creature of government. It was evolved by ministers as different as Jim Prior and Norman Tebbit.

Tory industrial policy took off little by little in exactly the same way. Now we have a highly competitive industrial sector which is export-driven, setting international benchmarks of its own, and attracting enormous amounts of investment. This week Toyota has created more jobs in Britain. Other weeks like this will follow, such as its motor industry's competitive edge, so much so that by the very early years of the new millennium we will be making more cars than the Germans.

If the political thinking and doing trick could be performed in the 1980s and early 1990s, it certainly can in the middle of the decade. It is daft to pretend that small majorities and problems over Europe are easy things to deal with. But thinking now is the recipe for victory at the hustings of 1996 or 1997.

That thinking must be realistic. Of course people like to "feel good", but in the era of post-modern politics they increasingly wish to feel right and feel responsible as well. The transfer of responsibility back to our people and away from big government, however well run, is a huge idea which has not in its turn begun to run its course. We have not half worked through the agenda we barely knew we had in 1979, and have largely created in the years of government since.

John Patten's book *Things To Come: The Tories in the 21st Century* will be published by Sinclair-Stevenson soon.



THROWING THE MATCH Peter Brown

## Canada comes of age

The halibut wars have at last made the world take notice of Ottawa

I cannot be denied, though it is a pity, that over the years Canada has had a poor image in the eyes of much of the rest of the world. It starts geographically: there is that huge mass of empty land sitting on the United States and giving it a headache, and the figures bear out the map — in Canada there are roughly two people to the square mile, but in the United States there are some 60 to the same area. (The US keeps its numbers down by encouraging millions of its citizens to shoot one another; it works well.)

Yes, but never mind the width, feel the cloth. What can Canada put forth to make the world take notice (apart from surtitles and subtitles in opera-houses, which were invented in Canada)?

What Canada needs is a bit of real bottle, but where is it to be found in this calm, placid and genial country? Its murder rate is shockingly low, its people are more or less fully literate, its attitude to visitors is warm and inviting, and — let us not forget — Canada came into the war, like Australia, as soon as it was declared, which could not be said, by a year and more, about America.

And just as I was despairing of Canada for ever, I heard a rumbling, then a shouting, then a cheering, then the sound of the big bang drum, and — hurrah, hurrah, and thrice hurrah — Canada is awake and roaring to go. And so am I.

It began a week or two ago, when a Spanish trawler, fishing illegally (of course it was illegal off the coast of Newfoundland, was seized by the splendid Canadians and held, crew and all. Now I admit that I do have a problem with working out which is my right hand and which my left, and am frequently found searching in the atlas for, say, Vladivostok, on say, the western side of Africa, but I am not actually barmy, and I do know that Newfoundland is not near Spain, not by many thousands of miles, so what I want to know is: the Canadian Navy fired shots across the bows of the pirate vessel to make it stop, but why didn't they immediately sink the marauder? This softness is all very well, but a couple of torpedoes (one at each side) would have been much better. Anyway, the Spanish ship — no doubt reeking of stale garlic — could be in the vicinity for one reason only: thieving. Obviously, they were waiting for dusk, when the crew would wade ashore and rob children, though only small

ones. More to the point, they were — even more obviously — looking for Canadian waters which they would denude of their fish. Naturally, they would then skedaddle.

But the marvellous Canucks spat on their hands and went to work, and such work just listen:

Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin said Canada would not release the Spanish vessel as demanded by the European Union. The EU also wants to allow them to fish until the fish are all gone. "I won't do that either."

Yes! Yes! We have our hearts' delight I deliberately concealed the most wonderful news till now. This is not just a fight between the Canadians and a pack of slimy brigands; the slimy brigands in question are the entire European Union! Come on, Canada, blast them out of the water for you and us, and please go further and bomb Brussels.

Oh, but it gets much, much better. EU chief delegates met in an emergency session in Brussels... demanding that Canada release the *Estai*. They asked the European Commission to draw up a list of potential retaliatory measures against Canada. "It does not exclude any measure," said João Vale de Almeida, a Commission spokesman. In a strongly worded statement, the chief delegates demanded that Ottawa immediately order the release of the Spanish vessel and called the seizure "an illegal and totally unacceptable act".

Had you ever heard or seen anything so gloriously funny? No, honest — had you? I hadn't, and I haven't stopped laughing since it all started. What about that wonderful bit that went "... It does not exclude any measure..." I would love to see that Spaniard (more garlic, even more stale) with the ludicrous name quacking helplessly till he burst with impotent rage. (Incidentally, I forgot to tell you what the name of the illegal ship, the *Estai*, means. "*Estai*" in their language means "one who steals anything that is not actually his". Unless of course there is a dog on the premises, even a pekinese. For that matter, João Vale

de Almeida means "quite astonishingly pot-bellied and greatly given to spluttering".)

And the great news is that Canada is not giving way. Those generous Canadians have today softened their stance by giving back the ship, though between you and me, I think they had to because of the garlic.

"We don't take this action unless we're strongly provoked," said Mr Brian Tobin. "When we say we take a conservation method, we take it. That's not bluff... It's not the mark of a pirate to reach out in desperation at the eleventh hour and try to save the last stock. It's the mark of a patriot."

More! More! And there is more — as much more as you want, and all free! The *Estai*, when it was captured fishing illegally, was escorted to Canadian waters in Newfoundland. The bystanders there shouted angrily, and well they might, for the fish-thieves of the European Commission (and don't think that the thieving was confined to Spain; Canada's fish was being stolen wholesale) were impoverishing many Canadians. Nor did the bystanders confine themselves to shouting; the captain of the *Estai* was, am delighted to say, pelted with eggs, and — wonderful upon wonderful — it is possible that one of them hit the Spanish Ambassador. Even if he was missed, the German Ambassador definitely was hit, and with a name like his — Hans-Günther Sulimma — he deserved it. (Mind you, the French Ambassador is called Alfred Siefert-Gaillardin; I take it he made himself scarce when the eggs were flying.)

Bravo Canada! I have made mock of Canada's enemies in this business, but I am certainly aware of two very important matters that came up among the laughter. One is that Canada will no longer be shrugged off as a nursery country which can be ignored when serious arguments are on the table. The other — and for us in Europe it is enormously important — is the startling importance that was demonstrated by the EU, when a serious man in a serious country said

"No". The Canadians have softened their line there, too, but be sure that they are not going to surrender.

Diet von Kynow (where do they get such names, for pity's sake?), the German Ambassador to the EU, said: "We have decided to block the dialogue with Canada in all areas, until the *Estai* is freed."

But, you ridiculous Kraut, are you so thick that you don't even understand that the jackboot — er, that is to say the slipper — is now on the other leg? The Canadians can switch off their threats and switch them back whenever they please, and leave that ghastly woman called Bonino or Mussolini or something, who goes about screaming and jabbering about "organised piracy", to her own devices. That's nothing; listen to this.

The EU ambassadors decided not to impose economic sanctions. As a first step, the EU suspended a scientific agreement with Canada last week.

The Canadians, doubtless not wanting a war, even a small one, have softened their position. There may be a stand-off, but I bet the Canucks won't give in until their position is secure.

The EU is still evaluating the impact of sanctions. Since Europe runs an annual trade surplus with Canada — amounting to £486 million in 1993 — sanctions could harm the Europeans more.

Oh, Canada, Canada! You slept long, but you are awake now, never to sleep again. Just imagine a parallel situation in Britain, starting with the Minister of Fisheries. But you don't need to do any imagining, because it has just been done: our Minister (some creep called Michael Jack) retreated behind waffle like "precipitate action on the high seas would help no one". Which, of course, in Michael-Jack-creep language, means that whatever Brussels orders in this business Jack will do as he is told. And as for Sir Leon Brittan...

Now put that crew beside the tremendous Brian Tobin, and tell me that if Canada has awoken, assuredly Britain has gone to sleep.

I can do better than that, unfortunately. While Tremendous Tobin was laying down the law, his Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, "has steadfastly supported the strong-arm tactics employed by Brian Tobin". Do you think that in a similar situation our stick of melting liquorice would be so loyal? Yes? No? You are both wrong; he would have scuttled to safety long before.

Philip Howard



Today red-faced cliché droppers will pay the price

So Radio 4 is running a cliché purge for Red Nose Day. So radio may not be the best medium for publicising generous but foolish red noses, ghastlier even on motor cars than on professional clowns. So Red Nose Day has stolen the thunder of April Fool's Day.

So, as a contribution to the rubicund-conk charity, listeners to the BBC today get a chance to sound off about pet aversions that make their blood boil, their flesh creep and their bloodshot eyes, like stars, start from their spheres, from that "feel-good" factor and "very bossily now, I am afraid I shall have to hurry you" to the ubiquitous little conjunction "so", used to kick-start every question and intended to introduce an air of logical consequence to an otherwise random and blunderbuss interrogation.

So every time a presenter drops one of the programme's nominated clichés, he or she will pay a £1 fine to Red Nose. So will this be the end of broadcasting as we know it? So will not the Anna and John (and Jim and Sue and Peter) Today show meet with an untimely end and come to a grinding halt if starved of the oxygen of cliché and the clear blue water of urgent waffle between it and less excitable programmes? How can they set the agenda for the day and steal the bottom line from the leaders in the morning newspapers without their rusty sword of cliché?

Those who live by the cliché shall perish by the cliché even on a level playing field. And those of us who make our living by recycling old clichés are foolish to invite public criticism of our MO (a *modus operandi* abbreviated cliché). The public is going to do that anyway, even without invitation.

The manner of broadcasting what are received as clichés, mispronunciations and solecisms annoys many listeners more than the matter of what is struggling towards the microphone. "Prevaricate" when he means "procrastinate", indeed! When any politician says "The fact of the matter is" you know that what follows neither is factual nor has relevance to the matter in hand.

Having said that, when all is said and done, it is crystal-clear that many of the complainers are "projecting" their complaints about life onto the imperfect language of extemporary broadcasters. Take away the clichés from Today, and Thought for the Day will have to run for three-quarters of an hour. And if we prune that inset programme of pious platitudes, hung by a slender thread from a fragile topical peg, the weather forecast will have to run and run as if there were no tomorrow.

However, this will not matter, because the shipping forecast is nothing but systematised cliché, with its comforting incantation about the Butt of Lewis lighthouse and other poetic place names. The point of weather forecasts, like the stock clichés in epic poetry, is that they are formulae murmured that pass through the mind without causing a ripple.

At that moment in time, at the end of the day, and indeed at either end of the day, we do not want John Birt's "overbearing and sneering" clichés to make us sit up. We want to curl under the duvet for a while longer, relieved to be missing the force-10 gales at Sole or possibly Seoul, and dreamily wondering how to spell the rune that sounds like north Uzzaera, and how you might know you were there rather than at south Uzzaera.

At this defining moment in time, every man Jack and every Tom, Deirdre and Harriet, every principle of decency and humanity, and the whole of Auntie Beeb from the grass roots to the cutting edge of the mahogany corridor at Broadcasting House, are agreed again and again on unimpeachable authority that your common-or-garden cliché is a flat, stale and unprofitable blot on the radioscope, to be avoided once and for all by all good men and true in the ongoing chattering classes situation.

My friends, before dealing with that, let me just nail this cliché. Contrary to popular mythology, clichés are the comfort blankets of public intercourse. Blasphe, I beseech you, with both hands the salient Mission Statement that in a caring society we need more bespoke clichés rather than the off-the-peg variety. Why not try "hit the Government for seven" or "the road to heaven also is paved with good intentions"? If hacks were licensed to use only phrases that had never been used before, the broadcasting waves would fall silent.

Man can bear only a little original thought, especially when engaged in as idle an activity as listening to the radio. We want to chug along gently while shaving or searching for matching socks without being constantly made to think.

Once a year Today may try to purge itself of clichés, but let me finish by reminding you that in the last analysis what the punters want is to tune in tomorrow morning at 6.30: same time, same wavelength, same jokes, same presenters, and same dear old clichés.

## Gas mark No 10

THE EARNING power of Cedric Brown was forgotten temporarily at a party on Wednesday night. The chief executive of British Gas was being entertained at Number 10 Downing Street.

The occasion, apparently fixed up before John Major suggested legislative backing to curb executive pay deals, was a leaving do for Jonathan Hill, political adviser to the Prime Minister.

Major has met the chief executive at previous functions — some in Huntingdon — but this was the first time the two had come face-to-face since the PM described huge pay deals as distasteful.

Partygoers were apprehensive about a confrontation between the PM and Brown, whose £475,000 salary is supplemented by a share-based bonus worth £93,000 and considerable share options.

But the couple passed, as they say, like ships in the night, giving Brown time to rub shoulders with all manner of other luminaries such as former Ministers Francis Maude (well paid) and Tristan Garel-Jones, with no sign of hostility. "It was a private reception to which Jonathan Hill's friends were invited," explains Brown's spokes-

woman at British Gas. "Cedric Brown is a friend of Jonathan's."

### Green gills

IT MUST be something about the Finns. After this column reported how Finland's Ambassador, Leif Blomqvist, sat through a diplomatic dinner with a menu balanced on his head, eccentricity appears to hit again — this time in Helsinki.

To celebrate St Patrick's Day in

GOSH, IS IT THAT TIME OF YEAR ALREADY?



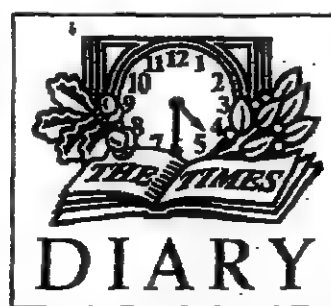
day, Molly Malone's pub in the Finnish capital is selling 1,000 gallons of green beer. Guinness did not take to the dye, but a Finnish lager, La Pin Kulta, will be served in Ireland's traditional emerald, by staff clad in green and decorated with green balloons. "I've tried it and it hasn't affected the taste," pledges publican Petri Naumanen. "In fact everything here is green."

### Rise and shine

A ROYAL introduction welcomed listeners to Radio 4 this morning: "Um. Hello. It's ten past six, time for Farming Today. So wake up everybody. Wake up geraniums and wake up all the plants. Make sure they are listening for Comic Relief."

An announcer reported the departure of His Royal Highness from the studio, then plunged into the fodder of the day: potato thefts followed by an item on artificial insemination problems among sows. Had the Prince of Wales tuned in, he would have been bemused. His introduction was the work of Rory Bremner, the television impressionist, who was making his debut on the earthy programme.

Lord McAlpine's suggestion that the Government should lose the next election brings to mind a



throwaway remark he once made: "One of my great problems is that the person who runs Macallan's malt whisky, which I love, is a dead ringer for John Major. It rather puts me off the drink."

### Winning tape

MASTER Oats's victory at Cheltenham yesterday caused a bit of a rumpus in the winner's enclosure after the Gold Cup because of the introduction of video technology.

For the first time, winning trainers, jockey and their friends were able to watch their race played back on video with champagne in a private room. Trouble was, they didn't want to leave.

"The Gold Cup winner's party wanted to watch over and over again," said a sweating steward. "We had to get them out to tape the

next race, then we had the winner of that one knocking on the door, but they were still going strong. The next lot ended up going off to the royal box."

Horror among the wine buffs at London Fashion Week as Ben de Lisi showed his collection. Glitterati were handed designer straws to sip their champagne. "We shuddered," cried Piper-Heidsieck, the show's sponsors. "But the lipstick remained unsmudged."

### Taking a lead

SIR HUMPHRY Wakefield of Chillingham Castle in Northumberland has turned to the breeding charts to heat off burglars. He is developing a new dog, the Chillingham bull mastiff. Its metric playful enthusiasm.

"They assault people in friendship, hold onto clothes and won't let go," he says of his boxer crosses profiled in this week's Country Life. "Hit them on the head and they think it's a tremendous joke, terribly funny. They just close their eyes and cling on tighter."

An embryonic breed, their Crufts debut is some way off. Numbers are low and there have been casualties. "Very sad. One was run over by a shooting bus, another failed to recover from be-



Sir Humphry dogging around

stings and died of hepatitis. Now I've got three left," he said. "They've got a small gene pool but so did the Rothschilds. And look at Jacob. He's formidable."

P.H.S





## THE DE GAULLE STAKES

Where dressage becomes a steeplechase and is not slowing yet

The French presidential elections are this year's most important European political event. The end of the Mitterrand years means inevitable change for France — and not only for France. All national elections differ in their impact on people's lives; and in France, the head of state continues to an exceptional degree to set the tone of political and social debate. It is the French public's sense that things must be different that has given Jacques Chirac's populist nationalism the edge over his conservative rival, Edouard Balladur — and has inflicted such a handicap on the Socialist, Lionel Jospin, who cannot but seek to defend the record of 14 years under a Socialist President.

The future character of the European Union is also at issue. The departure of Jacques Delors from Brussels, the first signs of Helmut Kohl's own *fin de règne* in Germany, and weak governments everywhere else will give the new occupant of the Elysée a chance to reassert the sway over the European agenda which France has always felt to be its natural prerogative. But on Europe, a faultline running through French politics as through politics here, little clarity can be expected. The main contenders are determined not to allow Germany's enthusiasm for political union to cast a shadow over their chances. Their themes have been resolutely domestic.

Since M. Balladur's huge lead disappeared in a trail of scandal, ineptly handled, a political race which began with all the sedateness of a dressage contest has acquired the thrill of a steeplechase. But it was not until yesterday that M. Chirac vaulted the hurdle of European policy which had seemed most likely to put at risk his recent surge into the lead. The balance he must strike between Euro-sceptics in his own RPR and the integrationists who have rallied to him from the centre-right is as complex as any John Major faces.

As a result, he managed to combine a pledge "to reconcile the French with one another

about Europe and reconcile the French with Europe", with an extension to the European arena of the highly effective attack he has mounted in the French domestic context on the "technocracy" which M. Balladur has the misfortune to incarnate. "A people's Europe" is safe, he says — particularly when allied with proposals to enhance the power of governments and national parliaments over the European Commission.

By promising a "great national debate" over monetary union, M. Chirac may succeed in deferring one until well after the second and decisive round of voting on May 7. M. Chirac remains entirely orthodox on the primacy to be accorded to the Franco-German "couple". But for now, the message is leavened with Gaullist echoes of France's "unique role in the world".

To describe the election campaign as a battle for the future of Gaullism may seem far-fetched. It is 21 years since France last had a Gaullist President — and 25 since de Gaulle was buried. President Mitterrand has done much, in his 14 years in the Elysée, to fillet the Fifth Republic of its ancestral bones. But the essence of the Gaullist legacy — strong president, weak parliament and powerful bureaucracy — has survived. So have unstable parties and volatile voters. Gaullism, to which both M. Balladur and M. Chirac lay claim, has the appeal of suggesting a new "mission for France".

M. Chirac plays this psychological game far better than the Prime Minister. His assault on "conservatism, with its half-measures and inadequate reforms" aims at the large numbers of French people whose disgust with the entire structure and conduct of French politics finds its main outlet in street protests and votes for fringe politicians. But many of these same people feel threatened by change; so he has also revived the "social vocation" of early Gaullism. His opponents accuse him of being all things to all men. But that, in the troubled state of French society, could be his greatest asset.

## NEW SLATES FOR OLD

A few small flaws in the McAlpine plan

"There is a huge potential if this country will keep its nerve, grasp the opportunities, maintain its competitiveness and go for it," said Michael Heseltine yesterday. Substitute "party" for "country", and there is still some plausible case for recovery in the Government's fortunes. Many Tories, however, have lost their nerve — and the will either to compete with Labour or to "go for it".

A few console themselves with the perilous notion that Opposition would do the Conservatives good. Lord McAlpine, former party treasurer and devotee of Margaret Thatcher, is today the most prominent of this persuasion. He calls himself a "clean slate man" — he wants this Cabinet out of office so that "a charismatic leader, a sort of John the Baptist" can rescue the party.

It is easy to sympathise with his frustration, somewhat harder to share his analysis. During the Reagan era in the United States it was a commonly expressed view on the right that four years of Jimmy Carter was a small price to have paid for eight years of a true Conservative leader. But before the 1976 election, the number of Conservatives who actively helped President Ford to defeat by the peanut farmer from Georgia was small. Hindsight can be good for boosting party morale; but it is also a great deceiver.

It is certainly possible to look back and identify elections which might have been better lost. If Labour had won in 1992, for example, it would have had to devalue sterling, raise taxes and cut public spending. The Tories could have made hay with Labour's economic incompetence, and would probably by now be looking forward to re-election. But to predict the desirability of defeat at future elections is far more perilous. The Conservative party could readily split asunder if it lost power. Labour,

under a more attractive leader, will inherit a far healthier economy than in 1992. The Tories — or what would be left of them — could be in the wilderness for several terms.

Nor is opposition necessarily the fertile ground for ideas that Lord McAlpine and his like-minded friends proclaim. It is fashionable now to look back to the years between 1974 and 1979 as a time when new Conservative policies sprouted in profusion. Like many myths, it is only partially true. As John Patten describes on the opposite page, the new ideological sprouts were far from clear to those fighting against Labour at the time. Many of the best ideas, such as privatisation, emerged only in the first few years of government. Mrs Thatcher travelled light in Opposition: her 1979 manifesto promised little of the revolution that was to come.

Lord McAlpine is a great character and an engaging thinker whose loyalty to Lady Thatcher is well nigh unsurpassed. But his "clean slate" does not command the support of more than a small fraction of right-wing opinion. Some of its supporters are the embittered who have never forgiven Lady Thatcher's colleagues for depositing her; they wish defeat on John Major even more than they do on Tony Blair. Some see loss of power as an opportunity to put their man, Michael Portillo, into the leadership. Others, deploying the Machiavellian skill that Lord McAlpine himself has described in his books, hope that defeatist talk may cause a leadership battle before the election.

In the current Conservative mood almost anything is possible. But whether there exists a figure who can return from the wilderness to lead a Tory victory is doubtful indeed. The more likely beneficiary would be one of the very "old slate" whose members Lord McAlpine so despises.

## TRANSPARENT NOSES

Greater openness will benefit charities and their donors

Today's cavalcade of fundraising activities in aid of Comic Relief will once again entertain the nation, dominate the day's television and — we hope — inspire new heights of generosity. In the ten years of its existence, Red Nose Day has raised almost £100 million and become a fixture in the national calendar. Comic Relief's raucous style is not to everybody's taste; but its spirit is profoundly British, typical of a nation which treasures its charitable events and institutions.

The manner in which this particular charity has managed its affairs has been widely admired. Yet not all charities have had such a happy experience in recent years. In particular, the competition for donations is growing ever more fierce. There are now more than 170,000 registered charities. The National Lottery will benefit charities in the long term; but, in the short term, it will simply draw funds away from them.

As a result, charities have turned increasingly to more inventive fundraising techniques, such as telephone marketing, and have spent more of their resources on professional fundraising groups. This is professional fundraising in a minority of often money well spent: in a minority of cases, however, their rewards have been less obvious. Earlier this month, new regulations required by the 1992 Charities Act came into force which should help to address these concerns. Professional fundraisers

must now make clear how their work will benefit charities and what commission they will be paid for running an appeal. Any business involved in fundraising must have a written agreement with the charity. Donors who pledge £50 or more to a professional fundraiser as a result of a telephone or broadcast appeal will be entitled to change their mind within seven days.

Such measures, it has been argued, will stifle spontaneity. The right to a refund, for instance, will create more administration for charities since, after an event such as Red Nose Day, all donors who have promised more than £50 will have to be phoned back to be informed of this entitlement. On balance, however, the new regulations are extremely welcome. The mechanisms monitoring charities are immeasurably stronger than they used to be. The Charity Commission has been given greater powers to investigate charities, which are now required to produce proper accounts for inspection by donors.

Better training for trustees — many of whom face a daunting administrative task — is also being promoted. Charities need an understanding of best practice as much as they need goodwill. Such measures will encourage greater public trust; that can only be good for the causes which charities such as Comic Relief represent so vigorously.

## Conservation nub of fish dispute

From the Director, World Wide Fund for Nature

Sir, The release by the Canadians of the Spanish trawler has been hailed by the European Fisheries officials as a victory (report, March 16). It is, of course, no such thing. It merely allows the Spanish boats to continue their pillage with impunity. The losers, as always, are the fish stocks.

As your leader (March 14) correctly states, the dispute of the Canadian Grand Banks is at its core a conservation issue, despite the political and legal arguments advanced by the European Union. Of all developed nations, Canada has been the most active in conserving its fish stocks, and understandably resents seeing its commitment undermined by other countries that show no such responsibility.

Over the past year, there have been more than twenty disputes between nations over fishing rights, and these will accelerate as countries squabble over declining stocks. What is needed is an enforceable global fisheries management treaty that will both regulate access and promote conservation.

The UN Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (what an arcane title) is due to reconvene in New York on March 22. WWF has been pressing the conference to agree strong enforcement measures for the management of stocks in international waters against the combined opposition of the main fishing nations, not least the European Union. It will be interesting to see whether the Canadian experience will in any way modify the EU stance.

Yours sincerely,  
ROBIN PELLEW,  
Director,  
WWF UK,  
Panda House, Weyside Park,  
Cottrell Lane,  
Godalming, Surrey,  
March 16.

## Meat and two parrots

From Mr Charles Lyte

Sir, The *Grocer*, essential reading for the shopping classes, announced on March 4 that a cross between a parrot and a carrot (a parrot, perhaps) could soon be on the supermarket shelves. It is called, according to the report, the Hamburg parsley.

It is in fact a parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* var. *tuberosum*), otherwise known as the turnip-rooted parsley or Hamburg parsley. The nearest it is to a carrot or parsnip is by being part of a vast botanical family, the Umbelliferae.

Philip Miller described it in his classic *The Gardeners Dictionary*, first published in 1731, and nearly two pages are devoted to it in the English translation of *The Vegetable Garden* by "M.M." Vilmorin-Andrieux, first published in 1885. Like many others I have grown and eaten this delicious vegetable with its faint flavour of parsley and aniseed for years.

I merely write this to avert unruly scenes in the vegetable departments of supermarkets among customers eager for a miracle of genetic engineering.

Yours faithfully,  
CHARLES LYTE,  
Carters Corner Place,  
Cowbeech, East Sussex.

## Beach combings

From Mr Edward Pond

Sir, You reported on March 13 that seaborne debris from Canada is being washed up on Scottish beaches. On March 14, at Stackhouse Cove on the Lizard, Cornwall, I found a very water-worn leather football marked "Bermuda Department of Education — striving towards excellence". Should I send it back?

Yours etc,  
EDWARD POND,  
The Coach House,  
99 Blackheath Park, SE3.

## Hong Kong policy

From Sir Robin McLaren

Sir, Mr Bernard Levin has taken some words of mine as a peg on which to hang one of his periodic denunciations of the "treachery" of the British Government over Hong Kong ("The seeds of betrayal", March 10), although he acknowledges that he may have done so unfairly.

The words he quotes were used in answer to questions after a lecture which I gave at the University of Hong Kong in November last year. Neither the lecture, which dealt with the central place which Hong Kong has occupied in Sino-British relations over the years, nor my subsequent remarks seem to have provoked in Hong Kong the indignation which Mr Levin has chosen to heap upon them.

Mr Levin regards my CV as "amazingly revealing", trotting out his familiar thesis that knowledge of China and experience of negotiating with Chinese officials go hand in hand with a chronic tendency to appeasement. How much easier to deal with China from a position of principled ignorance. Inconvenient facts of geography and history can then be brushed aside.

I spent more of my official career living in Hong Kong than in China.

## Adams and Anglo-US relationship

From Mr Timothy W. Sewell

Sir, President Clinton's meetings with Gerry Adams in Washington (report, March 16) have significance way beyond the confines of the Irish question. They neatly demonstrate the reality of the "special relationship" so beloved of successive British governments.

Consider on the one hand the US Government's crass fear of offending the sensibilities of the Japanese by celebrating their defeat 50 years ago. Sensibilities, let it be noted, of a nation which has never adequately acknowledged or expressed contrition for its appalling war crimes.

In contrast there are the perfectly proper and rational objections of the British Government to Adams being given the opportunity of posturing as a peacemaker and collecting funds, neither of which is likely to calm Unionist fears or to advance the delicate peace process. The President's electoral prospects are all-important and do not take account of broader issues.

It is clear that the "special relationship" from an American perspective is the assurance that come what may the British will play the poodle and the odd kick will have no long-term effect. From the British angle the relationship has been an escape from reality, a belief that in a hostile world America will always turn up, eventually, to save us.

It is really time for the UK to realise that the future is within Europe among equals. Fifty years after the end of the Second World War we must let go of Uncle Sam's coat-tails.

Yours faithfully,  
TIMOTHY W. SEWELL,  
10 King's Bench Walk, Temple, E.C.4,  
March 16.

## Charity fundraising

From Mr Richard Radcliffe

Sir, John Gray of the British Red Cross Society (letter, March 16) says: "It is crucial that the British public channel funds to organisations that have been well established, which have low cost-income ratios and are able to deliver services too." He is in a comfortable position to say this, but I bet his predecessor 125 years ago, when the Red Cross was founded, was not.

According to the register of the Charity Commission, 82 per cent of all 172,000 charities have an income of less than £100,000. Presumably, in John Gray's mind, these are not well established.

What we should strive to do is to help educate charities in methods of good practice (in terms of trusteeship, management and fundraising) so that they are given an opportunity to become established.

If the British public only gave to well established charities then the heart of the charitable sector would stop beating.

Yours faithfully,  
RICHARD RADCLIFFE,  
Senior Charities Consultant,  
Buzzacont and Co.,  
4 Wood Street, EC2,  
March 16.

## Unconverted

From Lord Sterling of Plaistow

Sir, The item on the front page of your earlier editions today, "P&O chief will work with Blair", may be misunderstood. Let me make my position clear. I am a Conservative and that is how I vote.

I support the Conservative Government because I consider its policies good for business. On Wednesday I was asked: "If there were a Labour government and it led a similar trade delegation [to Israel] would I participate?" I said: "Yes, if it had sensible policies for business."

Yours faithfully,  
STERLING OF PLAISTOW,  
Chairman,  
The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company,  
79 Pall Mall, SW1,  
March 16.

Over the past 35 years I have watched the territory grow and flourish and have rejoiced in its success. Like successive ministers and governors, I am at least as concerned as Mr Levin that the people of Hong Kong should retain their freedoms and way of life after 1997. How best to preserve them is the question.

The 1984 Joint Declaration provided a good framework, like it or not, co-operation with China is necessary to put its provisions into effect. Achieving that co-operation has proved hard going, particularly since 1989. That does not make it any the less important.

Invectives against "brutes and tyrants" in Peking no doubt makes Mr Levin feel better, but moral outrage is not an adequate basis for policy when the future of six million people is at stake.

Yours faithfully,  
ROBIN MCLAREN,  
British Ambassador to China,  
(1991-94),  
United Oxford & Cambridge University Club,  
71 Pall Mall, SW1.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

From Mrs Doreen Thompson

Sir, I do not think that the growing rift between Britain and America can be blamed solely on the respective Governments.

I lived in California for over twenty years, and I rarely encountered the kind of vitriolic reporting about Britain that is evident here in the reporting of news from the United States.

Many thousands of American tourists visit this country every year, they read newspapers and watch television, and often find themselves subjected to selective and negatively biased reports from our press and media about their homeland.

If the ties that bind do eventually stretch to breaking-point, then the press will be at least partly to blame.

Yours sincerely,  
DOREEN THOMPSON,  
14 Avocat Mews, SE28,  
March 15.

From Mr Thomas Hutchison

McFadden

Sir, There are plenty of us Irish Americans who love Great Britain and, conscious of an incalculable debt to you British, do not welcome deterioration of the friendship implicit in the "special relationship".

At the same time, we welcome Gerry Adams not because of Irish-American nostalgia but because he has brought peace, despite generations of British brutality against our ancestors, for which frank British apologies are uncharacteristically slow in coming.

Respectfully submitted,  
THOMAS H. MCFADDEN,  
Pembroke College, Oxford,  
March 13.

## Competence in the law

From Mr L. J. Bloomfield

Sir, Mr Barry Shaw (letter, March 9, other letters, March 15) is quite correct in his view of the vagaries of the Law Society's "market forces" procedure for recruitment into the solicitors' profession.

On the very day you published his letter, a meeting of the society's council overwhelmingly approved in principle a new scheme by which the society would confer a "quality certificate" upon those firms of solicitors which, in the society's view, achieve a high standard of competence in conveying or other disciplines such as probate.

These certificates, so it was said, would save members of the public the time and trouble of deciding for themselves which firm to use.

Just what criteria would be applied by the society had yet to be decided. One council member sounded a note of disagreement and inquired why the society should not be content instead to rely solely upon reputation and market forces as the surest guide for clients' choice, but his standpoint found scarcely any support.

"Market forces", it seems, are selective in their application.

Yours faithfully,  
L. J. BLOOMFIELD,  
(Honorary Auditor),  
The Law Society,  
28 Old Brompton Road,  
South Kensington, SW7.

## De mortuis...

From Field Marshal Sir John Stanier, Constable of the Tower of London

Sir, Fred Mulley may not have been the greatest Minister of Defence, nor was his a government which cared much for its armed forces. But nobody who devoted his life to public service, as Fred did, deserves to be so cruelly remembered.

The picture of him which you published today, accompanying your obituary, was for the news of the day, not for the recollection of the dead.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN STANIER,  
HM Tower of London, EC3,  
March 16.

From Mr Tom Hawkins

Sir, If Bernard Levin lives in a leasehold apartment, I hope if or when he negotiates a new lease with his landlord he will use more temperate language than that he applies to the Chinese over Hong Kong. Otherwise he too may discover that the landlord has more power than the tenant.

Most of Hong Kong was leased to Britain in the middle of the 19th century at a time when Britannia ruled the waves and had a powerful Empire. Subsequent Chinese governments have persistently questioned the validity of these leases. They gave advance notice that when the leases ran out they would repossess the territory held by the United Kingdom.

They have always refused our offers of a joint Chinese/British administration after 1997.

We might accuse the Chinese of all sorts of nasty things, as Bernard Levin does, but over Hong Kong they are perfectly within their rights as landlords. Sir Robin McLaren and the Foreign Office have dealt with the inevitable and made the best deal they could.

Yours,  
T. H. HAWKINS,  
Virginia Beeches,  
Callow Hill, Virginia Water, Surrey,  
March 11.

## Concern for future of Radio Oxford

From the Bishop of Oxford and others

Sir, We are concerned about the proposed closure of BBC Radio Oxford and its merger with Radio Berkshire. We feel strongly that this will destroy an important, long established and successful service for the people of Oxfordshire. Its proposed replacement with a station serving a quasi-regional Thames Valley cannot possibly succeed, and would be in direct conflict with the BBC's most recent strategy review which advocates more responsive local programming.

Oxford is a unique international centre and for the city not to have a local BBC radio station would be remarkable. A merger could also have national implications. There are already rumours that the BBC has plans to combine other local radio stations around the country. If this current proposal is allowed to go ahead, then other areas could be next in line for regionalisation.

We ask the BBC to think again about its service here in Oxfordshire which brings so much pleasure to so many thousands of people.

Yours sincerely,  
RICHARD OXON,  
DAVID W. ASTOR  
(Oxfordshire farmer),  
DAVID BRYER  
(Oxford, Oxford),  
COLIN DEXTER  
(Crested of Inspector Morse),  
PATRICK NAIRNE  
(Master, St Catherine's College, Oxford, 1981-89),  
PETER NORTH  
(Vice-Chancellor, Oxford University),  
PLUMB  
(MEP for Cotswolds),  
ANDREW SMITH  
(MP for Oxford East),  
c/o Diocesan Church House,  
North Hinksey, Oxford,  
March 14.

## Threat to tunnel

From the President of the Newcomen Society and others

Sir, Mr Stephen Dorrell, the Heritage Secretary, has announced that in future the public will be consulted before the Government lists buildings to protect them from demolition or alteration (report, March 9). We welcome this move, particularly in the light of an anomaly in the present system which threatens an outstanding monument of international importance, the Thames Tunnel.

Built by Marc Isambard Brunel in 1825-43 between Wapping and Rotherhithe, the Thames Tunnel was the world's first underwater tunnel and was only made possible by Brunel's invention of the tunnelling shield, the origin of all modern tunnelling machinery. It is shortly to be refurbished by London Underground Ltd, when the bore will be lined with concrete, thus obliterating the original construction which, with routine maintenance, has adequately coped with its environment for 150 years.

Although the portal and stairs at the Wapping end have been listed as being of special architectural and historical interest, the tunnel bore itself, by an anomaly, has been excluded; no alteration is therefore open to scrutiny or to proper and informed discussion by the bodies set up to protect our national heritage.

Unless the Thames Tunnel is listed immediately, it will suffer drastic and irreversible disfigurement.

Yours etc,  
E. F. CLARK  
(The Newcomen Society),  
NEIL COSSONS  
(The Science Museum),  
WILLIAM FILMER-SANKEY  
(The Victorian Society),  
DENIS SMITH  
(Panel for Historic Engineering Works, Institution of Civil Engineers),  
c/o The Newcomen Society for the Study of the History of Engineering and Technology,  
The Science Museum,  
Exhibition Road, SW7.

## Silencing Sir John

From Mr Frank Nunneley

Sir, I am puzzled. Dr Bland writes (letter, March 13) that the result of the inquiry into the structure of local government cannot be described as "were bored by the questions" whilst others "were baffled by the intangible options and doubtful cost projections". Sounds like a general election to me.

Yours faithfully,  
FRANK NUNNELEY,  
Fairfield, Horseshoe Lane,  
Beckley, Rye, East Sussex.

## Rate for the job

From Mr Peter Mottley

Sir, Presumably the retired Colonel Norman (letter, March 15) would agree that what was once his own "mammoth industry" could find "at least half a dozen young, eager and competent men or women willing and able to do the top job at half the salary". Of course it could — but would it be wise?

Yours etc,  
PETER MOTTELY,  
9 Aston Close,  
Pangbourne, Berkshire.















INFOTECH 29, 30

Waiting on the words of Mr Microsoft

ARTS 31-33

To hell with Don Giovanni at English National Opera

SPORT 35-40

Roger Clark goes back on track to rally family business

TELEVISION AND RADIO  
Pages 38, 39

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook  
FRIDAY MARCH 17 1995

Sterling hits low as Bonn holds rates

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

STERLING plunged to another record low against a surging mark yesterday in a move that reflected the dollar's weakness more than obvious intrinsic problems of its own.

The dollar had slumped and the pound hit a low of DM2.2082 after the Bundesbank announced it had left its key interest rates unchanged. Later, both currencies recovered their poise after US economic statistics suggested the economy is slowing and therefore heading for a soft landing.

Only a minority of market players had expected the German central bank to ease rates, partly to bail out other currencies hit as investors have poured money into quality currencies.

Nevertheless, the news of no action from the Bundesbank was enough to give renewed vigour to the mark. Investors saw the bank's steadfast refusal to compromise German monetary policy because of

others' problems as another positive contribution to its inflation-fighting credibility.

The pound's fall to successive lows against the mark has been closely related to the dollar's problems. It has been a traditional and technical feature of foreign exchange trading that the two currencies tend to move in tandem. Sterling edged only a little lower against the dollar, which closed at around \$1.5920 to the pound from \$1.5990 late on Wednesday. But, in spite of its late recovery, the pound still ended at DM2.2097, more than 1½ pence down on Wednesday's close.

Economists said many of sterling's problems yesterday were technical but in the background are more fundamental sources of weakness. One is a perception that the Government is vulnerable. Investors also look askance at Britain's half-hearted approach to European integration. Mark Geddes, Treasury strategist at Midland Global Markets,



David Prosser, Legal & General chief executive, whose company's shares jumped as talks were revealed to transfer reserves on its life fund to enhance dividends. Report 22, Tempus 24

Barings investors look to Holland

By Robert Miller

THE glare of the spotlight on the Barings collapse yesterday shifted from Singapore and London to a small courtroom in Amsterdam. Trustees acting for two different sets of investors who lent money to the old Barings regime through an offshore arm of the bank want a ruling on where they rank as creditors, and how much they are entitled to get back.

When the Dutch court does decide, it could affect the proposed payout to UK life and pension companies and individual investors, many of them elderly, who lent a further £100 million to Barings through a subordinated loan note.

In 1986, Barings BV, an offshore arm of the UK group, issued £150 million of capital rate notes, followed in 1994 by a further £150 million of floating rate notes. In both cases the money, due to be repaid in 2001, was re-routed to Barings.

International Nederlanden Groep (ING), its new Dutch owner, said floating rate note investors stand to be repaid in full, while the capital note holders stand to collect £7.5 million. UK investors in the subordinated loan notes have been offered a similar £7.5 million settlement, but may not see even this.

Some 32 members of the Association of British Insurers are seeking to press ING for a full repayment of the £100 million. If not, many threaten to boycott any future paper or loan notes issued by either Barings or ING in the market place. ING said last night it sympathised with Barings' loan note investors. But added: "When a company goes from being £440 million in the black to £440 million in the red, you cannot expect that subordinated bondholders will not lose any money."

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3094.1	(+47.1)
Yield	4.37%	
FT-SE All share	1514.89	(+18.65)
Nikkei	16355.98	(-311.15)
Dow Jones	4055.38	(+26.88)
S&P Composite	494.74	(+2.88)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	104 1/8%	(103 3/4%)
Yield	7.25%	(7.38%)

LONDON SHARE

3-mth Interbank	6 1/8%	(6 1/8%)
Life long gilts	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
Future (Mar)	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)

NEW YORK

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## ABB and Daimler form rail venture

By COLIN NARBROUGH

ABB, the Swedish-Swiss engineering group and Britain's leading rail equipment supplier, is to combine its rail arm with Daimler-Benz's rail arm to form a world leader in the sector.

Daimler, whose AEG subsidiary is part of the Union Link consortium bidding to build the Channel Tunnel rail link, will pay ABB \$900 million to make up for the difference in size and profitability between the businesses being put into the 50-50 rail joint venture.

The new company, ABB Daimler-Benz Transportation, will be immediately in profit and have an estimated order intake this year of DM8 billion. Turnover is forecast at DM10 billion by 2000.

The venture, subject to European Commission approval, will make competition tougher in high-speed trains for GEC-Alsthom, the Anglo-French joint venture.

The ABB-Daimler venture will be made up of about 50 companies from ABB, including its rail works at York and Derby, and AEG's rail side. It will employ 22,000 workers in 40 countries and offer "full rail system solutions". Products and services will include advanced locomotives, high-speed and tilting trains and advanced signalling. The venture will be headed by Kaare Vagner, the Danish head of ABB Transportation.

Daimler is a big supplier to British Rail and London Transport. Its driverless trains operate at Gatwick and Stansted airports and AEG is part of a consortium developing a light rail system for Croydon.

ABB's transport arm made a \$140 million operating profit last year, but AEG, acquired by Daimler in 1986, has been a major source of losses. AEG lost more than DM1 billion in 1993 and sold its domestic appliances business to Electrolux of Sweden.

Percy Barnevik, president and chief executive of ABB, said last week that further delays in rolling stock orders threatened the survival of ABB plants at York and Derby. Without new orders by the autumn, mothballing is expected to start at York, while Derby will be scaled down.



Tighter grip: Tom Farmer, the chairman of Kwik Fit, announced a 15 per cent rise in profits yesterday, strengthening the company's position as the UK's leading car parts group (Susan Gilchrist writes). Pre-

tax profits jumped to £29.3 million from £25.4 million in the year to February 28, at the top end of City expectations. Earnings per share rose to 11.89p (10.39p). Mr Farmer said the group had gained share in

all three main product sectors of tyres, exhausts and brakes. It now has a fifth of the £800 million UK tyre market and a third of the £240 million exhaust market. It is still a small player in the £500 million

brakes sector but Mr Farmer said it was a rapidly growing part of the business. A final dividend of 2.70p (2.30p) brings the total payout to 4.40p (3.80p). Shareholders will be paid on May 8.

## Heseltine welcomes boost for jobs from Toyota expansion

By PHILIP BASSETT  
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

MICHAEL HESELTINE, the President of the Board of Trade, yesterday emphasised the importance to Britain of close links with Europe as he welcomed the announcement by Toyota, the Japanese car company, of a doubling of its UK production with the creation of at least 1,000 jobs.

Although Mr Heseltine, a pro-European, made no explicit connection between the continuing row over Europe within the Conservative Party and Toyota's move, Tory Eurosceptics acknowledged privately that he had successfully linked economic achievement in Britain with a close role within Europe.

Mr Heseltine, who held talks with Toyota's senior management on their UK investment during a visit to Japan at the start of the year,

said yesterday that the company would not have increased its stake in Britain if the UK did not have full access to European markets.

He added: "Toyota's decision is yet another vote of confidence in the UK as a favoured location for foreign investors. It signals their confidence too in the skills of the UK's workforce, in the potential of the local supply base and in the buoyancy of the UK

and wider European economies."

Toyota's announcement of a £200 million expansion of its car manufacturing plant at Burnaston in Derby will mean doubling its annual car production to 200,000 and adding the Corolla model to the Carina E it already makes there — 75 per cent of which is currently exported to Europe.

The move, which will create at least 1,000 jobs directly and

many more among component makers and other suppliers, was warmly welcomed locally. Bob Higgins, district secretary of the AEEU, the engineering union, said the announcement was particularly welcome because of the "desperately needed" jobs.

Recruitment and training of workers for the new plant, which Toyota will build alongside its existing factory, starting at the end of next year, will

begin in mid-1997, with the aim of beginning production in the second half of the following year.

Toyota's Deside engine plant in Clwyd is likely to benefit from the increased investment as some of the Corolla series engines will be worked on there.

Yukihisa Hirano, Toyota UK managing director, said: "Toyota UK has made a very successful start thanks to the hard work and commitment of its UK workers and European suppliers. The fact that we are about to expand is an endorsement of the quality of these people and of the products they produce."

Welcoming the move, Mr Heseltine said that Britain's car components industry would have to continue to improve its quality, delivery times and service in order to meet the "very high standards Toyota set them".

## Plea for transport investment

BUSINESS leaders joined with one of Britain's largest unions yesterday in a call for major investment in the UK's transport industry and the abandonment of such schemes as motorway tolling (Philip Bassett writes). Leaders of the TGWU

mounted what they described as an unprecedented alliance with a range of business organisations in the road transport industry to put policy proposals to Brian Mawhinney, the Transport Secretary, in reply to his call for a national

debate on transport in Britain. The business bodies included the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, the Retail Motor Industry Federation, the Road Haulage Association, and the Freight Transport Association.

## Rover helps to drive BMW up

Rover, taken over from British Aerospace last year by BMW, the German carmaker, contributed DM12 million to the group net profit of DM697 million, which was 35 per cent up on the previous year.

The Munich car group said yesterday that it would hold its dividend on ordinary shares unchanged at DM12.50, despite the profit surge, but would issue a bonus of DM1.50 on preference shares.

## Dealer ahead

Acquisitions and one-off property profits helped Sanderson Brannall Motor Group, the West Yorkshire motor distributor, to pre-tax profits of £8.44 million in the year to December 31 (£3.77 million). There is an increased final dividend of 2.3p (1.74p) payable on May 1, bringing the total payout to 3.3p (2.4p) for the year, from nearly doubled earnings of 19.27p (10.09p) a share.

## Cheaper beer

JD Wetherspoon, the pub operator based in the South East, has concluded a new five-year beer supply agreement that will offer the company a "marginal reduction" in its purchasing costs. Tim Martin, chairman, was reporting pre-tax profits that advanced from £2.62 million to £4.76 million in the six months to January 31 and a dividend increased from 2.2p to 2.75p.

## Spandex lift

Spandex, a supplier of equipment to the signmaking industry, lifted profits to £7.1 million before tax in 1994 from £5.45 million in the previous year, helped by a ten-month contribution from newly acquired interests in France. The total dividend is lifted to 2.5p a share from 2.3p, with a 1.75p final due on July 14. Earnings improved to 14.3p a share from 10.7p.

## Loss trimmed

Air France, the troubled French national carrier poised to sell its 37.5 per cent stake in Sabena, the Belgian carrier, to Swissair, yesterday said it cut its loss to Fr2.7 billion last year from Fr8.5 billion in 1993 and planned to modernise its fleet.

## L&G in talks with DTI over surplus

By SARAH BAGNALL  
INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LEGAL & General held out the promise of bigger dividend payments yesterday when it revealed talks with the Government to transfer surplus reserves on its life fund.

David Prosser, chief executive, said: "Discussions have been initiated with the Department of Trade and Industry with the objective of developing a more rational approach to the transfer from the long-term fund which would support the group's progressive dividend policy."

L&G is the latest of a growing string of insurance companies to seek DTI approval to apportion surplus reserves in the life fund between policyholders and shareholders.

The final dividend was lifted to 14.75p, making a total 21.7p (20.1p). Pre-tax profits fell from £181 million to £164.9 million in the year to December 31, affected by £51.7 million of investment losses, compared with gains of £35.5 million last time. Excluding investment results, profits rose from £145.5 million to £216.6 million. Life and pension profits rose to £163.9 million (£151.7 million). General insurance profits fell to £20.6 million (£27.3 million).

Tempus, page 24

## TOURIST RATES

Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.25	2.08
Austria S	16.65	15.18
Belgium Fr	48.80	44.89
Canada C	2.395	2.206
Cypriot Cyp	0.750	0.689
Denmark Kr	9.58	8.78
Finland Mk	7.92	6.87
France F	8.37	7.72
Germany Dm	2.38	2.17
Greece Dr	379.00	354.00
Hong Kong \$	13.00	12.00
Ireland P	1.05	0.97
Israel	5.251	4.475
Italy Lit	2005.00	2650.00
Japan Yen	157.50	141.50
Malta	0.600	0.545
Netherlands Gld	2.652	2.422
Norway Kr	10.56	9.76
Portugal Esc	250.00	231.50
S Africa Rd	nd	5.29
Spain Ptas	211.50	198.50
Sweden Kr	12.12	11.32
Switzerland Fr	1.98	1.80
Turkey Lira	nd	64730.0
USA \$	1.085	1.068

Notes: In small denomination bank notes, rates only as supplied by Barclays Bank plc. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### Underlying profits crumble at UB

UNITED BISCUITS, the McVitie's to KP food group, is to increase investment in marketing and new products to combat what it says are the most hostile conditions in the industry's history. Eric Nicoli, chief executive, said the group would seek to boost volumes to offset the new environment of lower margins. "In the 1980s we got growth from driving margins up. The approach for the 1990s is to drive the top line," he said. His remarks came as UB unveiled a 2 per cent fall in underlying profits to £178.7 million from £181.8 million in the year to December 31. At the pre-tax level, profits rose 15 per cent because of lower exceptional charges.

The reduction was driven by a sharp drop in profits from McVitie's and KP in Britain. Margins were squeezed by increased marketing expenditure and higher packaging costs which could not be immediately passed on to UB's retail customers. The UK crisp wars also hit KP's profits. Elsewhere the picture was more promising. The restructuring of the American operations delivered a 5 per cent increase in profits while the Asia Pacific region grew by 18 per cent. Ross Young, the frozen foods business, was also buoyant. The final dividend is held at 9.8p, making an unchanged total payout of 15.3p. Shareholders will be paid on July 3.

Tempus, page 24

### Big charge at Minorco

PROFITS have plummeted at Minorco's US goldmining operations causing the mining and industrial materials group to take an extraordinary charge of \$69 million to cover restructuring and the writedown of high-cost mines. Operating profits for 1994 rose from \$169 million to \$291 million after a strong performance by Terra, the agribusiness division. Minorco, which has changed its year end from June to December, is paying a final dividend of 38 cents to make 95 cents (57 cents) for the 18 months.

Tempus, page 24

### TeleWest at £65m loss

TELEWEST Communications, the first cable operator listed on the London Stock Exchange, yesterday reported a 1994 pre-tax loss of £65.2 million, almost double its £36.6 million 1993 loss, after the cost of building and depreciating its network continued to climb. The results were in line with analysts' forecasts. Turnover rose by 87 per cent, to £71.7 million. The company expects diminished losses this year as income from new cable television and telephony subscribers grows. The shares, issued at 182p in November, closed at 176p, up 4p.

### Warning by Asprey

ASPREY, the jeweller, moved to stem the steep fall in its share price in recent days by announcing that it expected profit in the second half to be similar to that achieved in the first half. However, it gave a warning that there might be limited rationalisation provisions for branch closures. Stock provisions are also likely. In November, Asprey reported pre-tax profits of £3 million in the first half, substantially down on the £12.2 million previously. Asprey's shares fell to 68p on Wednesday, a new low for the year. Yesterday, they rose 7p to 75p.

### Davis climbs to £25m

DAVIS SERVICE GROUP, the linen hire-to-cleaning services company, is raising its total dividend to 8.5p (7.98p), with a 6.63p final (5.25p). Pre-tax profits climbed to £25.4 million (£21.8 million) in the year to December 31 as acquisitions helped turnover rise 15 per cent to £322 million. Organic growth and a full contribution from the HSS tool hire operation helped profits from the site services division jump to £13.4 million (£7.54 million). Support services' profitability fell for the first time in eight years.

### Dawsonsgroup record

DAWSONSGROUP, the truck and trailer rental company, is lifting the total dividend for 1994 to 5.5p (4.5p), after earning record profits of £11.21 million, rising from £7.92 million. Earnings per share improved to 24.2p from 17.3p. The shares rose 18p to 303p. Turnover was 15 per cent higher at £61.3 million. Tony Frendo, chairman, said the improvement reflected the expansion of the core rental fleet and diversification into new rental sectors. The company continues to look to expand organically and by acquisition.

### Tilbury pegs payout

SHARES in Tilbury Douglas, the construction group, rose 35p to 468p after the announcement of a maintained 33p total dividend, in spite of a decline in 1994 pre-tax profits to £15.2 million from £20.9 million. Earnings fell to 30.2p a share (46.2p). The final is unchanged at 22.5p. The profits downturn mainly reflected the impact of disposals, with profits from continuing operations rising 16 per cent to £15.2 million. Highlights were a three-fold increase in building equipment profits and a strong performance from Scottish housebuilding.

### Antofagasta rises

ANTOFAGASTA HOLDINGS, whose interests in Chile span mining, banking, railways and water supply, said Mexico's economic woes had not affected Chile's prospects, with foreign investment rising 23.6 per cent in the first two months of the current year, directed mainly at productive sectors of the economy. Antofagasta reported a rise in pre-tax profits in 1994 to £38.3 million (£23.1 million) helped by a £16.4 million surplus on the sale of fixed assets and investments. A final dividend of 3.55p (3p), due on June 15, makes a total of 5p (4.2p).

## Managed Overdraft Rate Change

With effect from Tuesday 14th March 1995

The Co-operative Bank Managed Overdraft Rates

for small businesses will be as follows:

	% per month
Premium Rate	0.80
Standard Rate	0.88

The CO-OPERATIVE BANK

THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK PLC, HEAD OFFICE, 1 BALLOON STREET, MANCHESTER M60 4EP.

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□ Pilots shoot down insolvency law □ Tiny gets his retaliation in first □ Govett ambushed in search for establishment image

## Fat cats get the cream

THE squeals from the accountancy world were painful to hear. The happy brethren of the receivership world have long been accustomed to short-circuiting employment law at will, shedding staff as soon as it becomes apparent that their skills are no longer a saleable asset and expecting the Department of Employment to pick up the meagre bill for their statutory redundancy rights.

Now, three airline pilots have overturned all that. The Law Lords' decision yesterday means that any receiver who was rash enough to fire staff during the recession is likely to pay dearly for it. Like all good legal victories, this seems a victory for the common man — for the builders, assembly workers and shipbuilders who lost their jobs in the recession and were rewarded for 20 years work with as many weeks' salary.

The losers are the high street banks who, as senior creditors, always wind up with the lion's share of the proceeds from any receivership or administration. They now find to their fury that there is someone standing in the queue before them — the employees.

Taking from the banks to give to the workers has a certain Robin Hood appeal. Unfortunately, it is unlikely to work out that way. Most of the blue collar

workers who lost their jobs in duff companies during the recession did not have contracts that entitled them to more than statutory redundancy payments, so they stand to gain nothing.

Instead, it is, as ever, the fat cats who are likely to gain the most. All the directors of the 20,000 companies that crashed during the recession who were kept on for a few weeks by the receivers to show them where the bodies were buried are now on to a winner. They can claim their full severance terms, whether it is a three-year rolling contract or something similar, and look forward to banking it. This is patently grossly unfair. The same people whose incompetence or inability destroyed the companies they ran can now claim hundreds of thousands of pounds, even millions, from the creditors they let down.

In spite of such a travesty, the Government should think very carefully before bowing to the lobby from the insolvency industry to pass retrospective legislation. The principle of retrospective law is a dangerous one to contemplate, and presenting

such a Bill would create an ominous precedent.

Better to take this one on the chin, since the eventual bill is unlikely to be as high as the £1 billion being bandied about. Even better to ensure that the sloppy drafting of the 1986 Insolvency Act is not repeated. Ironically, the two offending clauses were included at the last minute in response to another insolvency case, but they were never intended to be as all-encompassing as they turned out. Who knows what other treasures lurk in recent legislation, just waiting for a bright lawyer to find them for a determined client?

### Govett's Duff deal

THE collapse of its attempted acquisition of Duff & Phelps is a bitter blow for Govett, the transatlantic fund manager. Duff represented the establishment image that Govett has long craved, and would have been a quantum leap for the group.

But full marks to the American Endeavour Fund for ambushing

### PENNINGTON



Govett so effectively. The fund timed its legal salvo to perfection, knocking almost a pound off the share price. Whether it wins the case now or not is largely irrelevant. The damage it sought has been done.

Although the affair has been interesting it raises a disturbing precedent. In the past, bids have been attacked with all manner of white knights, poisoned pills, demergers and special dividends. But the Govett affair has added another weapon to the financial arsenal: the poisoned lawsuit. It is one that is certain to be seen again.

In future all a malcontent needs to do is trump up some charges against the object of their loathing and wait for it to

organise a major share issue. As soon as the target breaks cover, it will be hit by a flurry of legal actions. While US investors take lawsuits in their stride, since suing is a national pastime, British shareholders get nervous when words like writ are bandied around. The share price tumbles and the equity issue hits a brick wall unless it is supported by a large band of indulgent sub-underwriters.

The dangers in this are apparent. Writs are cheap things to fire off. A solicitor should be able to write up your worst accusations in impeccable legalese for a few hundred pounds. But a well publicised lawsuit can and does knock millions of pounds off a company's share price. The poisoned lawsuit could become the financial equivalent of a DIY hydrogen bomb.

If the poisoned lawsuit does become commonplace in this country however, it will not remain so potent for long. Investors will quickly become used to companies slinging writs at one another without any great intention of following them up with a visit to the high court. It will

become just another feature of the hostile bid circus, just as the extended slanging match already is.

### Song of Rowland

TINY ROWLAND'S latest missive may not be quite up to the hair-raising standards of some of his public attacks on the Fayed's a few years ago, which could bring a smile to the face of even the most dour libel lawyer. But he has not lost his touch.

Mr Rowland was getting his retaliation in first ahead of next Friday's Lorrho annual meeting, which will probably see his removal from the company he created. The meeting will vote on his appointment as life president — an arrangement pre-dating his firing at the start of the month — which the remaining board looks like being successful in repudiating.

Much of his most stinging criticism is reserved for Dieter Bock, the adopted son turned paragon, but there are some entertaining flicks, among others,

at Stephen Walls, the non-executive brought on board by Bock and his camp, who "had recently become involved in running a frozen food company called Albert Fisher", whose shares, Tiny acidly notes, are at their lowest point for two years.

He details the breakdown in his relationship with Bock, which started on an ill-starred trip to Moscow when a smiling Dieter suggested a swap, shares in Lorrho for some in his private company. Tiny, after a polite glance at the balance sheet, declined. "All smiles ceased together," he records. Within two years, Bock, "incandescent with rage", was ordering him from the Lorrho headquarters.

But the most telling vignette relates to Lorrho's bankers, brought in to lunch after the City got cold feet in 1992, who carefully waited until after the cigars and brandy had been consumed before requesting the immediate repayment of £100 million or else. It was this about-face, says Tiny, which prompted the Libyans to check into the Hotel Metropole.

The cards are stacked against Tiny, but he should not be written off. His sharp tongue and talent for exhaustive research has brought great men low in the past, as one Alan Bond, back in court in Australia again recently, can readily attest.

## Chairman of Reckitt to step down

By SARAH BAGNALL

SIR Michael Colman, last of the eponymous mustard dynasty, is to retire as chairman of Reckitt & Colman later this year. His departure coincides with the imminent sale of the company's UK food business, which includes the mustard maker.

Sir Michael, 67, has been chairman since 1986 and is the great-great-nephew of Jeremiah Colman, who began making mustard at Stoke Holy Cross watermill, near Norwich, in 1814.

The household, toiletries and pharmaceutical group yesterday revealed a rise in pre-tax profits before exceptional items from £257 million to £270.3 million in the year to December 31. The group, which has a range of household brands, such as Dettol, Lemsip and Harpic, made a provision of £139 million. Of this £83.1 million is for the rationalisation of L&F Household, acquired for £1 billion after the year-end, while the balance is for reorganising the group's European manufacturing and distribution operations.

Analysts said the headline figure was in line with fore-

casts, but they expressed disappointment over the sales performance in Europe and America. European sales fell 2.3 per cent to £865.7 million and by 4.2 per cent in North America. The group recorded strong sales growth in Latin American and South East Asia.

Sir Michael said the results "reflect the slow economic recovery in most of the group's principal countries and continuing intense competitive pressures."

The company said plans to integrate L&F Household have yet to be finalised, but they were expected to produce annual savings of £40 million within three years. The company said the planned sale of the UK foods business was progressing, which, together with several other disposals of non-core businesses, was expected to raise about £400 million over the next two years.

The final dividend is lifted to 11.8p, making 18.66p, up from 17.34p. The dividend is being paid out of adjusted earnings of 45p a share (43.9p).

Tempus, page 24

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A Personal Equity Plan (PEP) is a way of investing money out of the reach of the tax man and The Times, in association with TSB Bank, is offering you the chance to win a £6,000 PEP. Answer the questions below, collect four of the six PEP tokens which are appearing each day, and you could win an investment in your choice of three TSB unit trusts:

- The TSB UK Income Fund aims to provide a high-income return with the potential for some capital growth over the longer term, from investments in Britain;
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These three funds, which were launched in November 1994, have all ranked in the top quartile of their particular unit trust sectors over the past three months. Because of the regulations governing PEPs, winners will receive a holding in the unit trust of their choice. Provided they are eligible, they will be able to convert this to a PEP at no cost either immediately or, if they have already taken out a PEP this year, after the end of the current financial year.

A PEP investment is an excellent home for long-term savings, with all income and capital growth exempt from both income tax and capital gains tax. Readers can obtain full details of TSB PEPs at their nearest TSB Bank branch.

**How to enter**  
Collect four of the six tokens which have appeared this week and send them on a postcard with your answers plus the tie-breaker by March 22, 1995 to: The Times Win a PEP Competition, Week 4, 16 Whitefriars Street, EC8B 2NG. The winner will be selected from all correct entries received by the closing date.

\* Source: Midpoint offer-to-offer, income not reinvested. (As at 18.2.95).

**The questions**  
1) What is the highest rate of income tax in the UK?  
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Tie-breaker: in no more than 15 words, explain why you would like to win a £6,000 TSB Personal Equity Plan.

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Fourth week  
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# THE TIMES CITY DIARY

## Signs of the times

AS THE Saatchi board faced shareholders yesterday at the turbulent extraordinary general meeting, members of a business born out of frustrations at Saatchi in 1986 were celebrating the fact that their multi-million pound firm has been acquired by Towers Perrin, the management consultancy. Kinsley Lord, also a management consultancy, was set up by four members of the Hay Group after it was absorbed by Saatchi. Their expertise lay in advising other businesses how to manage mergers, but their own within the maw of Saatchi was not going that well. Nine years on their business is now part of the tenth largest management consultancy in the UK and has a combined fee income of £36 million. One of the reasons that the four decided to depart Saatchi was a request for them to sign away their rights to work for other companies should they ever leave the group. They declined to sign, unlike other staff currently being pursued through the courts by Saatchi.

## Double woe

CHARLES SCOTT, acting chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi, — sorry, Cordiant, after yesterday's meeting — demonstrated graphically to one shareholder why the name had to be changed to avoid confusion between the similarly-named holding company and various operating subsidiaries. On Monday, Jennifer Laing became chairman of the UK advertising agency. On Tuesday morning, he learnt on the radio that Jennifer Laing had been appointed to his job. His eight-month-old daughter then added to the confusion in the Scott household — she chose that very moment to throw up on his best suit.



## ABN MBA

ABN Amro Bank may well have missed out on Barings, but the bank's purse remains open. Under a new financing programme between it and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, up to 100 students a year from Central and Eastern European countries will be able to undertake an MBA degree at top-tier business schools. The initial pool stands at \$11 million, the commercial risk of which is being shared equally. Loans, which at current market rates would be at 11 per cent a year, are repayable over a 12-year period.

## Name's Bond

HENDERSON Pension Fund Management has a new director — James Bond. 17 years with CU Morley, joins HPFM on March 20.

## On the rebound

THE Los Angeles courts are now so congested that cheque bouncers are being sent back to the classroom. Minor offences are sent to the fences are sent to the city's Bad Cheque Writers' School, where they are instructed in arithmetic.

## The privatisation of British Rail is now being pushed along at breakneck pace, Ross Tieman reports

A procession of captains of industry, middle managers and hired couriers will make their way today to the blue glass and steel offices of Samuel Montagu in Lower Thames Street in the City.

Such visitors call there every day. But the dry legal documents brought this morning to the bank's airy atrium are of special importance to all who work or travel on Britain's railways. For these are the first submissions from bidders keen to take over services on a large chunk of the network.

Although the start was sluggish, the privatisation of British Rail is now being hurried through at breakneck pace. The number of franchises being offered in this first round has been increased from six to eight. At the same time, Railtrack has invited proposals for the £1 billion reconstruction and operation of the West Coast main line. The action should enable Roger Salmon, the franchise director, to let more than half of all services to private operators by April 1996.

By then, most of BR's 60 support businesses, ranging from maintenance and engineering to train leasing companies, will have been transferred to the private sector. Railtrack, the core of the system, will be poised for flotation. Unless an election intervenes, the privatisation will be largely complete by the middle of next year.

Well, you can sell anything, at a price. But finding companies willing to run the services always looked like the hardest part of the plan. Dependent on subsidy, vulnerable to failures by Railtrack, and almost devoid of assets, the franchises appear to embody a high level of risk.

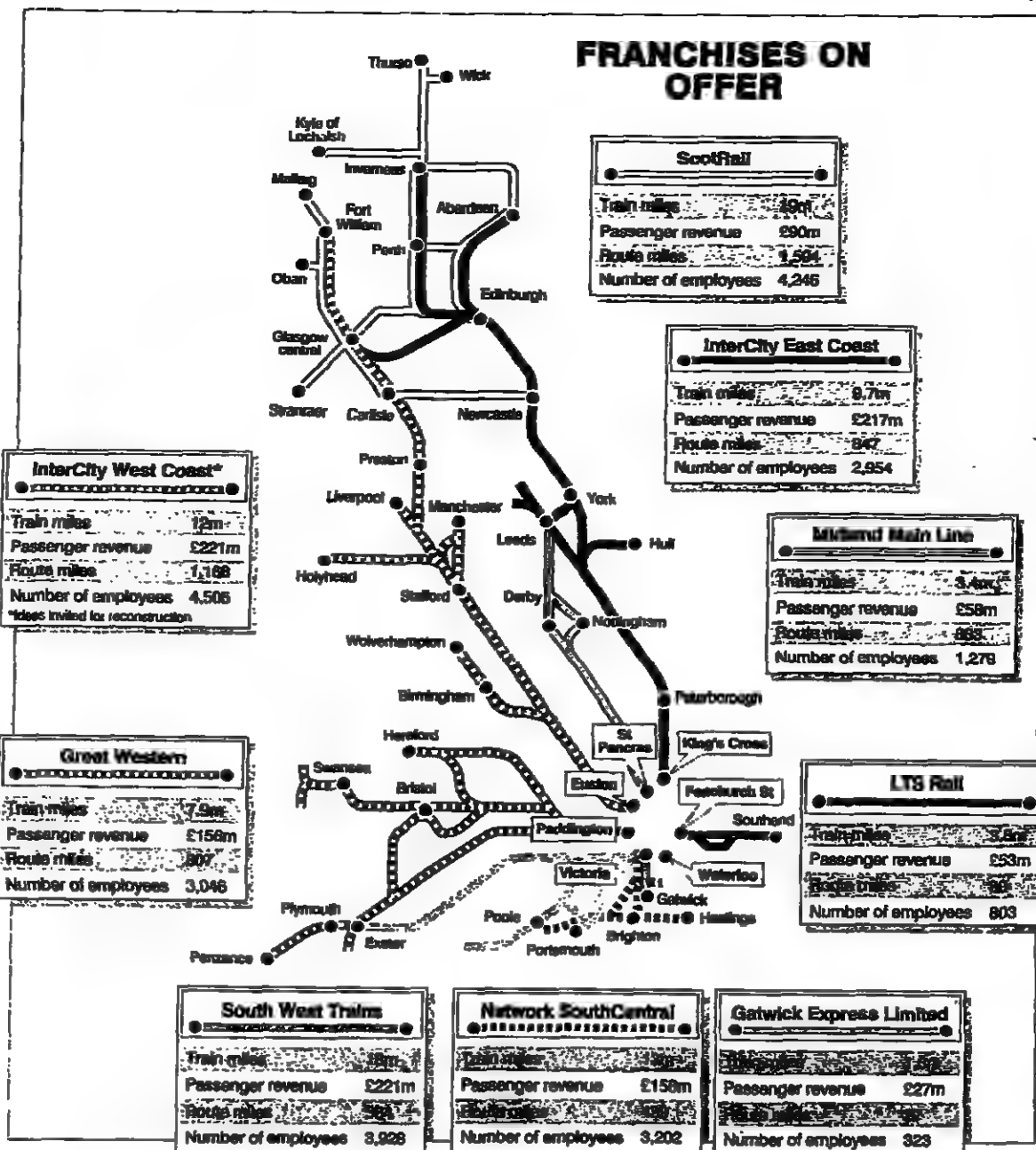
In a farewell interview, Sir Bob Reid, the British Rail chairman, said this week that he had opposed the franchise system. He added: "Some companies are going to get into trouble, as in any commercial enterprise. Those operators that are doing well will have to pick up the other ones."

Yet far from the dearth of interest that had been forecast, Mr Salmon insists that companies are now queuing to get involved. "I am expecting that we will have several bidders for every franchise," he says.

Almost every management team has found venture-capital backers to mount a bid. Some are already going public. Earlier this week, John Ellis, director of ScotRail, announced plans for a management offer to run the entire Scottish railway system.

Other bids are expected from utility companies, familiar with running regulated industries; from conglomerates seeking businesses with strong positive cash flows; and from transport undertakings, such as bus companies, which can reap advantages from integrating road and rail operations.

The pretence of competition over particular routes has collapsed. Even Mr Salmon believes that in the medium term, four or five companies will emerge to dominate provision of rail services. According to him, there will be considerable cost advantages to a company holding several franchises. And there are operational advantages too. London & Continental Railways, one of the four consortiums bidding to build the fast link from London to the



Channel Tunnel, plans to pre-qualify for all the franchises offered in the first round. In an effort to avoid rail services becoming a local political issue, the deadline for bids has been extended until after the local government elections. So on May 10, six days after the polls close, those determined to acquire franchises will submit their final bids.

Funny bids, though. No cash will be offered to the Treasury. Rather, bidders will indicate the level of government subsidy they will require to provide the minimum level of service stipulated by the regulator. In principle, the bidder willing to provide a service for the lowest subsidy wins.

But Mr Salmon says quality issues will count heavily too. Bidders will be allowed a lot of flexibility to offer bids that are very different from the base requirements. Mr Salmon insists he is not stalling-house for a new round of Beeching-style line closures. Rather, he hopes, gradually, to engineer improvements in service standards and a revival of railway use. "What we have is an enormous fixed asset with very high fixed costs," he says. "If you start trimming the edges of the network, you reduce the revenue. The way to get value from it is to earn more revenue."

The benchmark franchise term is seven years. Offers for longer or shorter periods, with different rolling stock, and novel marketing strategies will be considered. But scope will be limited. Each franchise will be let with a package of contracts in place for leasing and maintenance of rolling stock, supply of track services, use of stations, and so forth. Even so, Mr

Salmon will have to make some big value-judgments between the offers. Comparing apples and pears in this way will lead to long-drawn discussions with bidders. So the winners will probably be announced around Christmas, and take over running services early in the new year.

In spite of Sir Bob's doubts, Mr Salmon is adamant that the first franchises will be highly profitable. Well, of course. He holds all the levers, and he needs to ensure the first round is a success, so that he can let the remaining 17 franchises. How will he do so? First, by matching subsidy to track charges, so as to limit the downside risk of taking on a franchise.

A every commuter knows, Railtrack's well-publicised incompetence in staff relations pales in comparison to the daily litany of delays arising from points and signal failures. Underinvestment in Railtrack and poor management pose the biggest threat to the rail privatisation project.

Take a typical commuter franchise, such as Network SouthCentral. Farebox income of £150 million is supplemented by a £60 million subsidy. Fixed costs — largely track and rolling stock charges — amount to about £140 million. The franchise operator will control only about £80 million of staff and operating costs.

So to protect franchises from Railtrack's failings, Mr Salmon has devised a contract regime that, he says, will oblige Railtrack to pay compensation when trains are substantially

delayed. The longer the delay, the bigger the penalty. But the incentive for train operators to improve their own efficiency and win more business will also be strong.

Under the franchise regime, Mr Salmon says that "people will be allowed to charge higher fares where they deliver higher quality". Because of the subsidy regime, any increase in farebox revenue has a disproportionately greater effect on the bottom line. So franchise holders will also have a strong motive to increase the number of passengers carried.

But operators that heed the financial signals to improve face structural resistance. "Change is not going to happen overnight," says Mr Salmon. "There are lots of delays built into the system," he says, through the timetable, fares and constraints of existing rolling stock. Well, perhaps. But experience with other complex privatisations suggests that management conceal the scope for efficiency gains, and then trigger a fuss when they implement them. Rail privatisation is peculiarly political, especially in the South East, where many voters use British Rail to get to work.

Although the concept of privatisation is now widely accepted, attitudes to regulated industries in Britain are getting tougher. Labour's talk of a windfall utility tax can no longer be shrugged aside by investors.

Mr Salmon may succeed in containing the financial downside, but today's visitors to Samuel Montagu's edifice will need to keep a close eye on the political and regulatory risks outside.

## EBRD feels the heat over nuclear plant

The bank's biggest investment is proving controversial, says Colin Narbrough

Strong backing from the executive of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a controversial DM1.45 billion nuclear project in Slovakia has provided France's state-owned power utility with a springboard to complete an equally contentious Soviet power plant on Cuba.

Opponents of the Slovakian project, on which the EBRD and the European Commission are close to giving final approval, claim that Electricité de France (EdF), the world's biggest nuclear operator, is deliberately targeting the market for completion and upgrades of Soviet nuclear plants, regardless of the political repercussions, in the absence of demand in the West.

The Slovakian project at Mochovce will be the biggest investment so far by the EBRD, which will put in DM412.5 million. Euratom, the organisation of the European nuclear industry, is set to contribute DM366.3 million.

EdF, which is contributing DM250 million, will be the biggest Western industrial equity partner and main contractor with a DM1 billion construction order. It will also be joint operator at Mochovce, in southeast Slovakia, where Western technology will be used to complete four Soviet VVER-440/213 pressurised water reactors.

Non-nuclear Austria, which borders Slovakia, has warned other member countries of the EBRD that it could quit the bank if Mochovce goes ahead with the bank as its main financial backer. Vienna has been pressing the EBRD board to delay a final decision. The bank has persistently sought to underline that Mochovce is conditional on a more dangerous Slovakian plant at Bohunice being shut down.

Denmark and Norway recently came out against the Slovakian project too, arguing that the EBRD should follow other international institutions and say clear of nuclear projects. EdF involvement in completing a Soviet-designed nuclear plant, similar to Mochovce, near Cienfuegos on the south coast of Cuba, is likely to provoke protests from Washington. The design of the plant, only 180 miles from Miami, is considered fundamentally unsafe by the US.

A spokeswoman for EdF told The Times that experts from the company visited

the Cuban plant a month ago, after being contacted by Cuban officials, and explained what EdF was doing at Mochovce.

Jean-Pierre Desgeorges, vice-president of the French employers' federation, said in Havana earlier this month that EdF would produce an analysis on the completion of the plant, but the company spokeswoman denied that EdF was currently assessing the plant.

Cienfuegos involves two 440 megawatt reactors of the Soviet VVER440 model, upgraded versions of the type at Mochovce. Unlike the Slovakian plant, Cienfuegos has an extra safety containment, like Western plants.

EBRD financing is available for Mochovce on the grounds that it is a commercial project, unlike the Cuban plant. But Fidel Castro, the Cuban President, said in Paris on Tuesday that Cuba was looking into allowing foreign investors to hold majority stakes in joint ventures on the island.

Austria, still seeking to block Mochovce, this week protested to the EBRD management led by Jacques de Larosière, the bank's French president, that directors had

still not received a full report on public response. It also demanded clarification of the huge discrepancy between the number of measures proposed in an initial nuclear safety report made public in early December and the final version made available recently in summary version.

The Austrians, who voted in a referendum not to use the only nuclear power plant their country had built, are deeply concerned about Eastern Europe's continued reliance on nuclear power from plants based on Soviet technology.

Wolfgang Kromp, head of the Nuclear Safety Project at Vienna University, said that studies of non-nuclear alternatives, including power-saving measures, challenge the EBRD's argument that completion of Mochovce is the lowest cost solution for Slovakia.

He said studies conducted in a number of countries had also concluded that the EBRD figures badly underestimate the cost of completion to safety standards acceptable in the West.

Ukrainian officials this week said that Kiev may finally be ready to shut the Chernobyl plant, which caused the worst civil nuclear accident to date when its fourth reactor blew up in 1986.

## BUSINESS LETTERS

### Outside expertise

From Jo Cutmore  
Sir, I read with interest Graham Searjeant's article (March 7) regarding the use of non-executive directors in smaller businesses.

As a result of sponsorship by major employers, we have available many high-quality executives in major companies whom their employers are keen to provide "broadening" experience externally. They are equally willing to release these people to serve as non-executive directors on subsidiary boards of non-competing companies and into the public sector. Such people provide the sort of strategic input and value-added that Graham refers to, at very little cost. As well as these people, we have available a pool of quality people starting portfolio careers.

I hope that many more companies will begin to take advantage of this form of resource. Yours sincerely, JO CUTMORE, Prowess Ltd, 118 Eaton Square, SW1.

### Banning buyouts must not be option

From Mr Stewart G. Birt

Sir, Mr Michael R. Bond's letter on buyouts from receivers (Business Letters, March 10) should not go unchallenged.

He seems to think that receiverships are always a strategy of management to enable them to leave their obligations behind, following which, by means of a management buyout they can start again without the encumbrances of the past. This is clearly not always the case.

I led a management buyout of the company for which I worked, from administrative receivership.

The buyout was highly competitive and succeeded against four other serious corporate bidders. The revitalised company was immediately successful.

No company can be successful without its people, and usually the staff have had little or no responsibility for a

receivership in the first place. The banning of buyouts by employees and managers would effectively close the door to any attempt to right the wrongs done to them and regain the control of their lives which was taken from them by others.

Of course, a management buyout should succeed only if it is the best offer for the company or its assets. I imagine Mr Bond has suffered at the hands of a strategic receivership to hold such strong views, but he clearly has not thought the solution through.

If so, I have some sympathy for him, but banning innocent parties from trying to sort out their lives must not be an option.

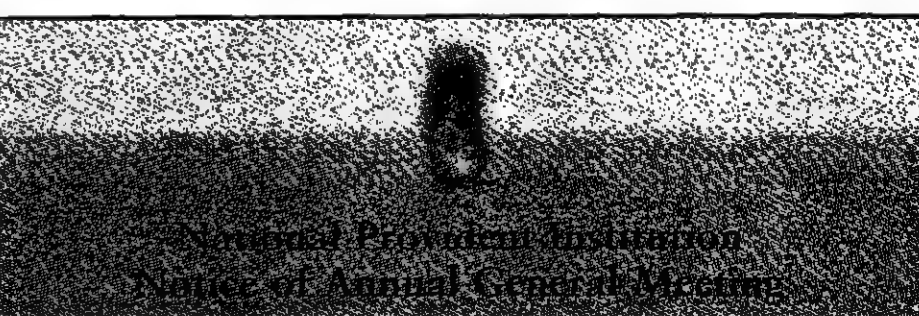
Yours faithfully, STEWART G. BIRT, Beechwood, Woodhead, Fyvie, Turrie, Aberdeenshire.

### Voting at AGM on directors pay

From H. J. Belsey  
Sir, Mr Cedric Brown, of British Gas, tells us that it is up to shareholders who disapprove of directors' emoluments to vote against them at the AGM of the company. I hold shares in several companies and for many years I have always cast my proxy vote against any share option scheme for directors. And what use has it been?

Yours faithfully, H. J. BESELY, Flat 3, Heathend, 4 Bromley Lane, Chislehurst, Kent.

Letters to the Business and Finance section of The Times may be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112



Notice is hereby given that the 159th Annual General Meeting of members of National Provident Institution will be held at the City Conference Centre, 76 Mark Lane, London EC3, on Wednesday, 19 April 1995, at 12 noon, for the transaction of the following ordinary business:

- \* To receive and adopt the Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 1994;
- \* To reappoint Directors;
- \* To reappoint Coopers & Lybrand as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to determine their remuneration.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD: S J O'Brien, Company Secretary  
Principal Office: National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2UE.

NOTE: A member entitled to attend and vote at the general meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and, on a poll, to vote instead of him or her. A proxy need not be a member of NPI. Proxy forms are available on request from the Company Secretary at the Principal Office. Completed proxy forms must be deposited at the Principal Office not later than 12 noon on 17 April 1995.



PROVIDING PENSIONS SINCE 1835

If you would like a copy of NPI's Report and Accounts 1994, write to John Fisher, NPI, GV02C, National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2UE.

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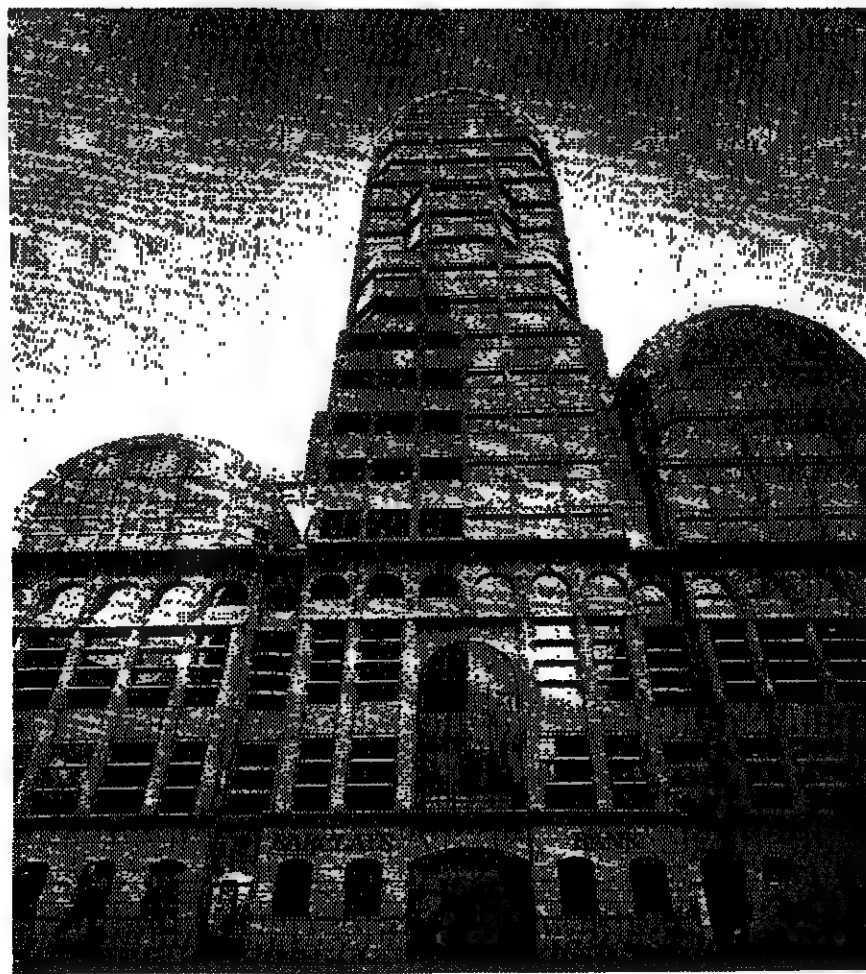


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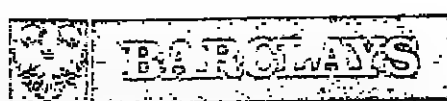
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## Equities and bonds sharply higher

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place ten business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

# Equities and bonds sharply higher

**TRADING PERIOD:** Settlement takes place ten business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1994/95 High Low Company Price % + - % PE				1994/95 High Low Company Price % + - % PE				1994/95 High Low Company Price % + - % PE				1994/95 High Low Company Price % + - % PE			
<b>BANKS</b>															
523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523	523
<b>DISTRIBUTORS</b>															
127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127	127
<b>BREWERIES</b>															
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<b>FOOD MANUFACTURERS</b>															
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<b>ELECTRICITY</b>															
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<b>PHARMACEUTICALS</b>															
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<b>PRINTING &amp; PAPER</b>															
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<b>PROPERTY</b>															
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<b>TELECOMMUNICATIONS</b>															
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<b>TEXTILES &amp; APPAREL</b>															
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<b>OTHER FINANCIAL</b>															
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<b>RETAILERS, FOOD</b>															
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## INFOTECH

## Can anyone stop Microsoft?

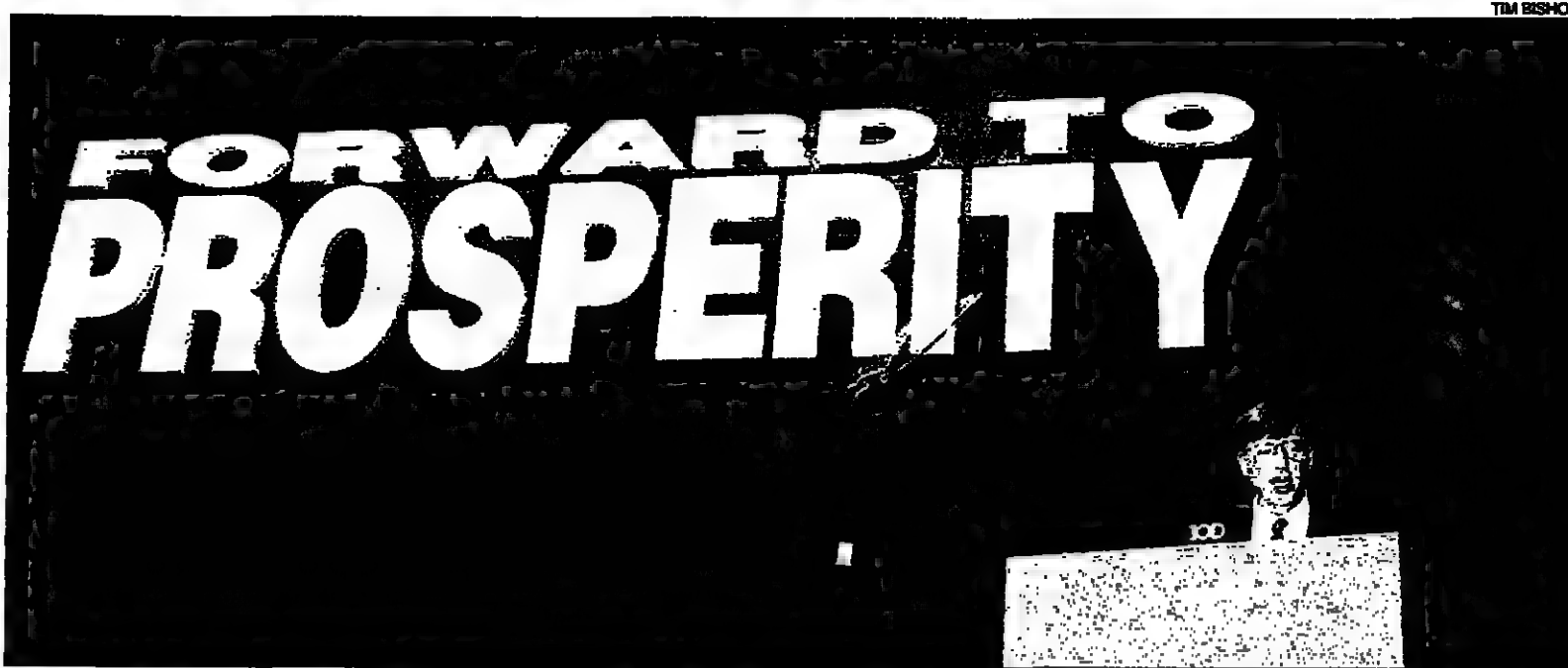
Bill Gates has kept everyone waiting for his Windows 95, says Matthew May

A little after 1.30 this afternoon, more than 1,000 people are expected to be sitting in the Birmingham Metropole Hotel ready to hear Bill Gates, founder-chairman of Microsoft, the giant software company, deliver a speech.

It will not be a new one. Mr Gates has given the talk, "Information at your Fingertips in 2005", before. But the billionaire, who is 39, will have a captive audience. The listeners will be those who sell the company's software and they are being promised a slice of business that Microsoft estimates will be worth £1 billion in British sales revenues for the first year alone.

Mr Gates has much of the personal computer industry, and many of their customers, on hold waiting for his new operating system. Windows 95. After much delay, it should finally become available in August.

Not surprisingly, this is to the great annoyance of competitors, such as IBM and Apple, which claim, with some justification, that they have operating systems on sale today that can already do what Mr Gates is only promising



Today, Bill Gates will describe to British software dealers his vision of the future. What they want to know is how soon they can get his latest software

for tomorrow. But existing Windows and DOS systems are used on more than three-quarters of the world's PCs.

That overwhelming domination of the market leads most observers to consider Microsoft unstoppable and that Windows 95 will sell just as well. What concerns competitors just as much is that Windows 95 will include easy access to an online network being planned by Microsoft.

Jim Manzi, the chief executive of Lotus Development, a rival software company, recently attacked Microsoft in an article in the *Wall Street*

*Journal*, saying that Microsoft was likely to dominate our technological future. He wrote: "Microsoft has systematically blocked rate-of-change competition and has actually slowed the rate of innovation in the marketplace."

Within a few years, he added, Microsoft could control the way computers are linked over networks as completely as it now dominates PC operating systems.

Other competitors are joining in the argument. Apple Computer has complained that Mr Gates made a barely veiled threat to stop producing

software for Apple's Macintosh, and Bob Frankenberg, the chief executive of Novell, the PC networking software company, says he has not ruled out the possibility of filing an antitrust lawsuit against Microsoft because of the way it intends to link its online service to Windows 95.

To the delight of Microsoft's rivals, there is also Stanley Sporkin, the judge who rejected a proposed antitrust settlement between Microsoft and the US Justice Department. The judge says it would

not be in the public interest because it takes too narrow an approach. This week he insisted that such a ruling was well within his authority.

When Steve Hayden, an advertising executive, finished a presentation recently on his latest work for IBM, he unbuttoned his shirt and revealed a telling fashion statement. To a cheering audience at a computer industry conference in Phoenix, Mr Hayden, who heads the IBM account for Ogilvy & Mather, showed off a T-shirt depicting the judge over the words "Our hero".

Realistically, however, Microsoft's overwhelming dominance is likely to change only if customers decide that the technical advantages of rival products are sufficient to desert the market leader.

Is there any sign that the tide might turn? At the German computer show, CeBIT 95, last week, IBM was able to announce a line-up of big German companies that have signed up for OS/2 Warp, its alternative to the world of Microsoft operating systems. They include Deutsche Bank,

insurer Allianz Holding, Mercedes-Benz, Audi and Lufthansa.

Though IBM gave no details about the contracts, it claims that at least a million versions of the software would be installed on computers at key corporate clients by the end of next year. Since October, IBM says that it has sold more than a million copies of Warp in Europe, half in Germany.

Apple Computer also has its star areas. Dataquest, the research firm, said this week that Apple Computer topped the booming market for multimedia PCs last year, selling 2.35 million machines. Apple has also sold more than one million Power Macs — a new range launched only a year ago. Each sale means the customer has opted for an Apple rather than a Microsoft operating system.

It will be an uphill struggle, but if IBM and Apple can convince a few million more PC users that Windows 95 is not the only choice, Microsoft may at least start to face some irritating competition.

## ONLINE

## Messages on page

MERCURY has announced a £50 tone pager. Message Call. Callers phone a voice mailbox to leave messages and the pager's owner is then beeped to signal that a message is waiting. A PIN number is used to listen to the message.

There are no subscription charges. The only catch is that to leave and retrieve messages, users have to use premium rate phone numbers which are charged at 25p a minute at economy rate and 39p a minute at all other times.

in prison. He was released after a psychologist testified that he is unlikely to act out his fantasies.

## Mail service

DELPHI Internet has started an electronic mail service on which customers can send up to 1,000 messages for £5.88 a month. E-mails can be written offline using a special program. To "post" a letter, users click a button with a red pillar box which instructs the program to go online using the telephone line just long enough to

transmit and fetch mail. Subscribers must pay for their phone calls to the Delphi mail centre, which has an 0171 code.

Further information: 0171-757 7080.



## Key jury

A JURY in America has sided with IBM against a former high school secretary who blamed the company's keyboards for repetitive strain injuries to her hands and arms.

The jurors decided that IBM had used reasonable care in designing the keyboards and was not negligent in failing to put warnings on them. The jury also thought that responsibility should rest with an employer, not the equipment's makers. The woman had also sued Apple Computer, but Apple reached an out-of-court settlement because of a legal error in preparing the case.

## Student freed

JAKE BAKER, the University of Michigan student accused of sending out a threatening story on the Internet, has been released on \$10,000 bail. Mr Baker was charged last month after he named a female classmate in a fictional story about rape and torture that was placed in one of the discussion groups on the worldwide network.

Prosecutors said the story constituted a real threat and wanted Mr Baker to be kept

## Caught, booked

MIRAMAX Films has acquired the worldwide rights to a book about how the FBI caught its most wanted computer hacker, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*.

Catching Kevin: *The Pursuit and Capture of America's Most Wanted Computer Criminal* is being written by computer consultant Tsutomu Shomamura, who helped the FBI to catch Kevin Mitnick last month.

Infotech is edited by Matthew May. E-mail address: matt@timesdelphi.com

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David Guest explains how experienced IT workers can command greater salaries in marketing

Anyone who takes the slightest interest in salaries will be aware of job categories that command bigger rewards than their own. In information technology the most obvious contrast for technical specialists is provided by the money apparently available to those who sell the equipment, programs and services they themselves produce.

It can be a big difference. In sales, as in technical roles, a couple of years' experience is important, but thereafter salaries can rise steeply. Programmers or analysts with two years' experience might expect to make £25,000 a year; salesmen and women could command that and more as basic, with twice as much contingent on their meeting targets. Not surprisingly, a lot of IT sales people come from a technical background. This is partly a consequence of the complex nature of the product being sold.

Steve Broughton, UK sales manager of Synon, a company that produces programs to drive sophisticated business systems, began his career as a clerk with the Midland Bank and moved into IT through becoming first an operator, then a programmer and finally an analyst. His present role involves finding and training new sales personnel. He expects to recruit a good proportion from the technical side of the business. "When you are in your early twenties," he says, "you will

# From keyboard wizard to super salesman

find that there are not many opportunities for a rookie salesman. So if you are interested in computing, the chances are that you will go into the technical side."

Of his own transition from embryonic boffin to salesman, Mr Broughton says: "What surprised me at the time was that you could learn the techniques of selling."

He believes that the switch now would be less dramatic for the kind of people Synon employs. "The technical people tend to be more and more customer-facing. In the old days, you would have kept them in a cupboard and maybe let them out every now and then. But now there is a support role that involves their spending a lot of time with customers."

Helene Imok is divisional manager of Jigsaw, a recruitment consultancy that specialises in placing sales and marketing professionals in the IT industry. She suggests that personality is at least as important as background. "I think it is fair to say that there is a personality that is appropriate to sales," she says. "I would be looking for someone dynamic, switched-on, with good presentation skills and perhaps the gift of the gab."

"When I find someone like that, the next thing is to take them and market them almost as a product — if they have C skills [a popular programming language], for example, you can go to a company looking for that and sell them the person on that basis."

The skills shortage that makes C++ programmers and relational database specialists valuable commodities applies also to sales staff in those areas. A technician with such skills has the choice of exploiting them in the technical arena or applying them to a sales context.

Ms Imok says that the time needed to move completely from technical work to sales varies with personality, attitude and even the nature of the product being sold. "If someone is pretty switched on, maybe you can move them straight to telesales and after a few months into full sales," she says. "But it can take from 18 to 24 months. If I put someone into the PC

area, which has a fast turnover, people can prove themselves very quickly. But if you are selling something that involves a six-month cycle time, proving yourself obviously takes longer."

She adds a cautionary note about the working life of salespeople. "If you are on the technical side, are involved with the day-to-day technology and keep yourself up to date, you should still be employable at 55. But a sales person might be on the shelf at 40, so they should try to get into an executive role."

Mr Broughton is inclined to disagree. He says: "If you put a 45-year-old technical specialist next to a 45-year-old salesman, the argument might hold. But a lot of the sales job has become commoditised. Genuinely professional sales people are in demand as a result."

"Those companies that still sell directly quite like 40-year-old sales representatives, although, admittedly, there are fewer such companies around. But it makes sense: if you are running BP or Shell as an account, you want a mature individual to run them. You would not give it to a novice."

In fact, the average age of salesmen is going up, he says. "If you are selling a commodity that is difficult and complex, and you are looking for new business, you need to have been through the mill and to have a full understanding of the complete sales process."



Steve Broughton: "Professional sales people are in demand"

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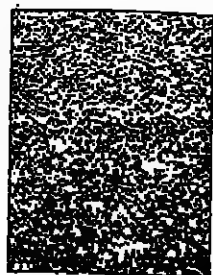
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**POP page 32**  
Rock meets corporate  
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# ARTS

**POP page 33**  
Rave review: David  
Sinclair tunes into  
Radiohead, a band on  
tomorrow's wavelength



**OPERA:** English National Opera produces an unmitigated stinker; but 600 citizens of Peterborough can't be wrong

## Mozart damned in staging from hell

As Leporello sings in the Act I finale: "This looks like a disaster." In the current political climate a disaster is the last thing that English National Opera needs. But it is a hideously convenient word with which to sum up the new production of Mozart's opera that opened on Wednesday.

Could it have been prevented? In theory, perhaps yes. It is a co-production with Flanders Opera, and opened in Ant-

**It is the apparent lack of basic directorial skills that offends**

**Don Giovanni**  
Coliseum

The only detectable strand of thought is what looks like a creepy element of misogyny: Anna, Elvira and Zerlina (the last-named a calculating trollop) all seem, as the tabloids might put it, to be "longing for it", and the first two are presented as figures of fun. This is not a sound basis on which to stage *Don Giovanni* in 1995.

Just as depressing is the treatment of the text. There are many good lines in the tried and tested Holden translation, but they are not directed to be sung with point, and laugh after laugh is killed stone dead by laboured, dogged delivery.

There are few musical compensations. Markus Stenz, the conductor, has a good ear for timbre: the overall sound is refined and nicely balanced. Some of his speeds are too brisk for a house the size of the Coliseum, but the graciings and vocal embellishments are welcome.

Purely musically there is much to enjoy in his reading, but there is also a fatal lack of dramatic impulse and feeling — can the trio beneath Elvira's window ever have sounded so wooden, so joyless?

One's heart bleeds for a more than capable cast. Peter Coleman-Wright (Giovanni), John Hudson (Ottavio), Penelope Walsley-Clark (Donna Anna), Janice Watson (Donna Elvira), Urban Malmberg (Leporello).

There are few musical compensations. Markus Stenz, the conductor, has a good ear for timbre: the overall sound is refined and nicely balanced. Some of his speeds are too brisk for a house the size of the Coliseum, but the graciings and vocal embellishments are welcome.



Victims: Peter Coleman-Wright (Giovanni), John Hudson (Ottavio), Penelope Walsley-Clark (Donna Anna), Janice Watson (Donna Elvira), Urban Malmberg (Leporello)

## Hundreds sing in city's moving epic

**In Search of Angels**  
Peterborough  
Community Opera

In the beginning was Mother Fen. She created the world and appeared the sea. When an Abbot arrived in a boat, her people deserted her, and the Angels appeared. They watched as the people built their cathedral. A Malcontent arrives with a destroying army. The Angels flee, released from the images that have trapped them. The Malcontent reappears, and the desperate search for the Angels steps up...

This is the story of Peterborough, with and for the people of Peterborough, told by 600 of them aged from 7 to 84, in collaboration with a team from Glyndebourne Education. Tonight, tomorrow

and Sunday, Glyndebourne takes over the city, singing, dancing and samba-ing its way through town in the chill of the night, with its third and most ambitious community opera written by Ali Campbell and composed and conducted by Jonathan Dove.

Dove's score encompasses fiddle and faltering voice, recorders and barbershop choirs, operatic principals, rugged choruses, cleric and commoner, angel and devil. Yet the strength of its structure, the freshness of its imagination, the detail of its set pieces would enable it to be enjoyed as well on disc. This is community opera with no concessions.

Peterborough, Dove and Campbell have, over the period of a year, created a vision of a past and a future eternally present. You are lucky, though, if you get more than a tiny glimpse of it at any given time. Images, words and musical phrases appear, disappear and reappear among the thronging promenading audience and the equally immense cast. They flow, like the tide of time itself, from cathedral transept (Act I) to nave (Act II),

out through the precinct, past the Guildhall and into the Queensgate Shopping Centre (Act III). Woe betide anyone who doesn't flow with them.

Stay too long, enraptured by the recurring choruses, the huge, rolling choruses, the might of Mother Fen (Nuala Willis) or the haunting visions of the Poet (countertenor Jonathan Peter Kenny) and you might get mown down by a brass band changing site, or the sea-nymphs about to flood. Sit too comfortably on the cold corner of a pediment and you might find yourself unwittingly on the set, trampled to death by tiny angels in gaberdes.

Out of the hurry-burly comes a rolling echo of another, earlier East Anglian sea storm, another community Fludde: as the Tree of Knowledge reaches up to heaven, Valhalla seems to be built; as wood and stone turn to a nave aglitter with silver and gold.

The deafening rhythms of the samba band draw the crowd out into the night. The shopping mall is seen in its full grotesquerie. The dispossessed join hands across the centuries. "Forgive us," they sing, "for flying too high." The Angels suddenly appear on the escalators, and the thudding samba leads the company down to earth and out, back into the night.

HILARY FINCH

**THEATRE:** A Liverpool family struggle to lift new year spirits; minced Ibsen with liberal helpings of spiciness

## The ghost of marriage past

**Uganda**  
Theatre Upstairs,  
Royal Court

Back comes the family from seeing in the new year at the local pub, to find Dad, who has not left the house since his wife died five years ago, proposing a characteristically dismal toast to the lady's memory. "To Dorothy," he mumbles in the vague direction of her photograph. "I'll be with you soon, love." It is not exactly a recipe for the good time that surely ought to be enjoyed in a nice working-class house at the Scouse counterpart of Hogmanay.

In this, Dad's wassailing has something in common with Judith Johnson's new play. It, too, is a bit of a downer. It is intelligently observed, well written and quite funny at times, yet it lacks momentum and tension. The emotional stakes are high

enough to get your attention, but too low to rivet it.

The main success of Polly Teale's production is David Fielder's playing of Dad himself. He traipses red-eyed from his chair in front of the television news to his nightly can of baked beans in the kitchen, looking like the wraith of a mangy grey stoat and sounding pretty spectral, too. His children, led by Sally Rogers' Trish, dance dutiful and even affectionate attention, but cannot wean him from long, mournful silences punctuated by mumbles of

crabby self-pity. Not until the arrival of Trish's boy-friend (Kulvinder Ghir), an Asian who remains resilient despite having lost his family home in Uganda and a pretty young wife, does Dad recover a little resilience himself.

Before long the old boy is preparing for a trip to London and even thinking of heading off to Kampala. Fielder's wary, furtive performance makes this reawakening less mawkish than you might expect, but it is not free from sentimentality. There are other times in the play, too, when you feel that Johnson could give her characters a good, hard Liverpool look and a good, hard Liverpool shaking. Hints of parental disagreements between Dad and his long-lost Dorothy go for nothing. Bad

feelings between his son (Karl Draper) and his wife (Ashley Jensen) do little more than hover hesitantly in the air. More, much more could be made of Trish's elder sister (Tanya Ronder) and her lover (Ruth Lass).

With sounds of John Major coming from the telly, and references to Bosnia, there are intimations that Johnson wants to give her play a political dimension. If so, she does not achieve it. Instead, she offers us a good-natured account of a rather ordinary family with a few problems, none of them particularly awful, let alone insuperable. It is not a formula that generates terror, pity, or even much fun.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



David Fielder: the play's main success as the mournful father reawakened by the experience of an Asian man

## That Henrik, he had it on the brain

**How to Live**  
Watermans,  
Brentford

VOLCANO Theatre invariably provide an exhilarating night at the theatre, even when it is unclear what the actors are up to at some given moment or other, and no saying what they will be doing at the next. Leaping from tables, leaping onto one another, they erupt across the stage and, much like Etna or Mauna Loa, are happy to throw things at us — in this case a baby.

The rubber infant may have been Little Eyolf, or Eilert Loeborg's child, or possibly one of the Master Builder's offspring, because Volcano cram six or seven Ibsen dramas into the minor and shove significant fragments together for us to compare and contrast. The title is the didactic message of all Ibsen's plays.

though most convey it by demonstrating how not to, and Volcano are out to represent the message through a four-dimensional collage.

Now that Ibsen has been enthroned in theatre's Valhalla, the god of reason and reform, the passions that drive his characters tend to be forgotten. Or so they argue, and I would argue against them, but am perfectly happy to enjoy watching their vigorous endeavour to redress what they see as imbalance. Hedda Gabler collides with A Doll's House, When We Dead Awake

en awakens Brand, as the cast of four race through a sequence of contradicting stage-directions — "She gazes up at the ceiling," "He throws himself desperately into the snow" — and sit, stand, gaze, throw, wave pistols, claw the air and collapse.

Ibsen is fatally easy to parody. You don't even have to change the words, just *emote* without inhibition. Fern Smith is the expert in this. She and the others are agile and funny, and Ibsen is soon reduced to the absurdity of early Ionesco, but a more serious purpose is hard to locate.

Suddenly the actors break from their roles and become themselves. Smith and the gawky direct Jane Arnfield (a splendid giggler) discuss the sexual features of the men.

Richard Ryder may be losing his looks but has a nice burn. Paul Davies's asthma attacks increase his penis size. Even the director (Nigel Charnock) comes in for criticism. Smith and Ryder launch themselves into the horniest tango you are likely to see outside a strip club, and now the evening's argument becomes clear: whatever else old Henrik includes in his plays, he is always writing about SEX. Try living without it and you may as well jump into a fjord.

Right they are in finding this message there, and though a good production of, say, *The Master Builder* will also find it, Volcano's sizzling teamwork gives us a bright and gamey reminder.

JEREMY KINGSTON



Richard Ryder and Fern Smith: half of a foursome keen to treat Ibsen with the reverence he deserves

### THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

## Surfing the superhighway

How to survive and prosper on the information superhighway

Wrist-mounted televisions, computers and telephones, fridges that will notice when we are out of milk and tell the car to buy some on the way home: this is the digital future. Nicholas Negroponte, director of MIT's Media Laboratory in Boston, will guide Times readers through the technological maze in a fascinating forum on the digital revolution and its impact on our lives to be held in London on Thursday, April 6.

Chaired by John Diamond, the Times's computer guru and columnist, the forum will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, at 7.30pm.

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... Radiohead are broadcasting to Britain ... Kirsty MacColl drinks Caitlin Moran under the table ... Gene stretch for Olympus

# Wired up for better reception

Like the ugly duckling that turned into a swan, Radiohead have suddenly bloomed into one of this country's most magnificent bands. Initially viewed with suspicion as a possible one-hit wonder after the rogue success in America of their 1993 single, *Creep*, the five-man group from Oxford have never been treated on an equal footing with the much more fashionable Blur/Suede/Oasis gang. Having been ignored by the British media until their debut album, *Pablo Honey*, was well on its way to selling a million copies abroad, the band have had to make do, thus far, with little support and only grudging respect at home.

But that has changed with the release this week of their second album, *The Bends*, a sensational collection of songs which has rightly garnered glowing reviews across the board.

"We've made an album that we're really proud of, and I just feel completely vindicated," says singer and guitarist Thom Yorke in a rare burst of unabashed delight. "I feel we can do exactly what we like from now on."

As the lyricist and principal contributor to the band's five-way songwriting axis, Yorke is primarily responsible for the stirring melodies and dark, psychologically-scarred anthems which are Radiohead's stock in trade. A short, spiky-haired character with a lazy left eye and a meagre physique, his ruminative appearance belies an agile mind, an iron will and a formidable store of pent-up energy. At Hallam University in Sheffield, mid-way through the band's current British tour, he wanders restlessly about the Students' Union bar area before the gig in a

## David Sinclair meets a band tuning in to tomorrow's wavelength

moth-eaten fur coat, a sort of blond, punk version of Richard III.

Very much the man with the vision thing, Yorke is the focus of the group on stage and its spokesman off. Understandably, he has come to be closely associated with Radiohead's songs, which are assumed, willy-nilly, to be the personal confessions of a deeply troubled young man — "that *Creep* guy" as he sometimes finds himself identified in the street, particularly in America.

Sometimes it's confessional. Sometimes it's not," Yorke says. "I probably felt like a creep when I wrote that song, but I don't think I'm a creep all the time. Actually, I think a lot of what we do is quite humorous, but nobody else on the planet seems to agree. Standing on a stage singing 'I want to be part of the human race', it's got to be a bit funny, hasn't it?"

In most descriptions of Yorke's lyrics, there are several words which crop up a good deal more often than "humorous": top of the list in recent weeks have been "self-loathing", "angst" and "despair".

"If I'm happy I don't usually write," Yorke allows, warily. "I'm happy after I write. There's an enormous sense of release. But I don't feel that we have to carry on churning out songs that are all about desperate human beings at the end of their jether la-la-la-

That's all a bit old and boring now. It's a fine line between writing something with genuine emotional impact and turning into little idiots feeling sorry for ourselves and playing stadium rock."

Yorke and the other members of Radiohead — Ed O'Brien (guitar/vocals), Phil Selway (drums), Jon Greenwood (guitar/keyboards) and his brother Colin Greenwood (bass) — started the band (originally called On A Friday) while they were all at Abingdon public school in Oxford. They each went on to different universities, but managed to keep in touch, waiting until all of them, except Jon Greenwood, had completed their degrees before reconvening and turning professional.

While other former public-school rockers — such as Joe Strummer and Shane MacGowan — have gone to strenuous lengths to distance themselves from their backgrounds, the various members of Radiohead have made no effort to cover their tracks. Yorke is obviously a creative and highly-strung individual who would doubtless seem like an outsider no matter where he came from. But the other four are relaxed, well-spoken characters, without any of the usual downmarket rock 'n' roll affectations. Rather than competing with Yorke for attention, they act as a unified support system for bringing his high-voltage ideas to earth.

They display little enthusiasm for the stereotypical role-playing that tends to go with being a rock band on the road, save for one intriguing detail. They are doing the entire tour, which takes them from Truro to Aberdeen and most points in



Bringing it all back home: Thom Yorke in full flight at Hallam University, Sheffield, on Radiohead's extensive British tour

between, without staying at hotels. This entails sleeping, indeed living, on the tour bus for two weeks, which is far from standard practice for a band at this level (even the support group, Marion, are staying in hotels).

"A lot of bands can't stand tour buses, but we're the opposite," Yorke insists, a little sheepishly. "It's that gang thing, isn't it? It's like you're going camping for two weeks. But it's on a bus. It's a bit sad really."

The show at Hallam is anything but sad. When people compare

them to U2, it is not because Radiohead sound like the Irish megastars, but because their music has a similar sense of high drama and drive. They do not do anything particularly flashy, but within minutes of taking the stage they make the 950-capacity hall seem far too small to contain the sound and sheer conviction of their music.

Yorke, in particular, buries himself in his performance, singing with stark intensity in his high, pained voice. His guitar lets him down during *The Bends*, so he hurls it to the floor and carries on

without it, twitching and jumping as if he is indeed suffering from the life-threatening effects of rapid pressure changes in the bloodstream to which the song refers.

For Yorke, the skinny kid who spent his childhood in and out of hospital, undergoing operations to correct the paralysed muscles in his almost-blind left eye, a disability for which he was teased mercilessly at school, you feel that this is more than just a job or a fantastically rewarding creative outlet. "Being in a band is about wreaking your revenge on the

world. It's like when you get chucked by your first girlfriend. You just say to yourself: I'm going to be famous one day, and then she'll regret doing that."

Radiohead's tour continues at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston (01772 20120), tomorrow; Middlesbrough Town Hall (01642 24236), Sunday; Manchester University (0161 275 2930), Monday; Watlington, Northwich (01603 766366), Wednesday; Roadmender, Northampton (01604 31408), Thursday 23; Forum, London NW5 (0171-284 2200), next Friday. The Bends is released this week on Parlophone 8 29636.

NEW ALBUMS: Morrissey's disciples ... Elton's flop

## A Gene genie called Smith

GENE

(Costermonger GENEICD) ELASTICA, Sleeper, McAlmont, Tricky ... less than three months into the year, and already 1995 has produced an unusually impressive crop of debut albums by British acts. But the new group which seems to have been most obviously groomed for greatness is Gene.

No strangers to the music press, and certainly not a band to underestimate their own importance, Gene have cleverly manoeuvred themselves into position as next in line to the 1990s starmaking dynasty that produced first Suede and then Oasis.

Where Suede were influenced by David Bowie, and Oasis have continued to borrow heavily from the Beatles, Gene take as their template the music of the Smiths. In particular, singer Martin Rossiter comes to the Olympus party armed with a stock of Morrisseyisms such as "six months inside Wandsworth's finest landmark" (from *Truth Be Your Head*) and "I'm at my lowest ebb/So please don't take that tone" (from *Still Can't Find The Phone*) which he delivers with a familiar touch of melancholy and a suitably arch flourish.

They are saved from being a Xerox of the Smiths by Steve Mason's thoughtful guitar playing — loosely modelled on Faces-era Ron Wood — and a bristling self-confidence which permeates songs such as *Haunted By You*, *To The City* and the especially seductive *Sleep Well Tonight*.

Olympian is defined in the dictionary as "majestic or godlike in manner or bearing". That is putting the case too strongly, but as an opening gambit this is an album which sets Gene safely on course for greater heights.

FAITH NO MORE

*King For A Day — Fool For A Lifetime* (Slash/London 828 560) AS betrays a band so famously given to dizzying extremes of musical and personal behaviour, Faith No More's latest offering is an album crammed with stylistic contradictions.

The barbarous thrash metal riffing of *The Gentle Art Of Making Enemies* rubs shoulders with a striding, jazz-swing saxophone solo in *Star A.D.*; the gently swishing samba of *Caralho Voador* gives way to a writhing, brutalised mess of a song called *Ugly In The Morning*; and the earthy moving sound deployed on *Digging The Grave* is immediately superseded by the mournful, country-rock twang of *Take This Bottle*.

As an album, it lacks coherence, but as a brilliantly executed, bloody-minded exercise in musical lateral thinking, it is unbeatable.



Gene: the group most obviously groomed for stardom

ELTON JOHN

*Made In England* (Rocket/Mercury 526 188) WHATEVER Elton John's reasons for embarking on his current round of luridly confessional interviews ("I took cocaine every four minutes" and so forth), reading about his personal excesses is a lot more entertaining than listening to this latest batch of songs. While his lifestyle may have been as wretchedly degenerate as that of any "serious" rock 'n' roller, as a songwriter John's credibility remains stuck on the far side of zero.

*Made In England* is a predictably stodgy collection whose tone is accurately signposted by the big-production ballad *Believe*, currently drifting down the chart after briefly peaking at No 15.

The arrangements divide into jaunty singalongs (*Lies, Pain, Made In England*) and overwrought, cartoon epics (*House, Cold*). The lyrics, by Bernie Taupin, or just Taupin as he now styles himself, are either sentimental ("Please, please let me grow old with you") or self-pitying ("I had 40 years of pain and nothing to cling on to"), but rarely match the mood of the tune to which they are appended. *Pain*, for instance, marries the most desolate lyric of the lot ("Pain is love/Pain is pure/Pain is sickness/Pain is the cure") to a cheerful, romping little riff with faint echoes of *Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting*.

The last straw is Belfast, a misguided attempt to empathise with those caught up in the mortal turmoil of Northern Ireland, which simply sounds patronising: "I never

saw a braver place, Belfast".

Like so many of our national institutions, John is out of touch and out of time. The best that can be said about *Made In England* is that it is not a collection of duets or cover versions.

CHRIS DUARTE GROUP

*Texas Sugar/Surat Magik* (Silverstone OREC 534) A SUPER-GIFTED guitarist from Austin, Texas, Chris Duarte combines a youthful outlook with the technical instincts of a blues traditionalist. The title of his group's debut album is a pastiche of *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*, the watershed album by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and on a sublime version of the old Meters' number, *Just Kissed My Baby*, the trio marries a Stevie Ray Vaughan-style attack with the kind of massive, funk-rock groove that the Chilis delight in.

Played with real flair, and produced by Dennis Herring, whose previous clients include Camper Van Beethoven and Throwing Muses, the album has a raw immediacy which is rarely captured on contemporary blues recordings.

DAVID SINCLAIR

## TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 Medusa ... Annie Lennox (RCA)
- 2 Elastica ... Elastica (Deceptive)
- 3 The Colour Of My Love ... Celine Dion (Epic)
- 4 Greatest Hits ... Bruce Springsteen (Columbia)
- 5 King For A Day ... Faith No More (Slash)
- 6 Parklife ... Blur (Food)
- 7 No Need To Argue ... Cranberries (Island)
- 8 The Bends ... Radiohead (Parlophone)
- 9 Galore ... Kirsty MacColl (Virgin)
- 10 Beggar On A Beach Of Gold ... Mike & the Mechanics (Virgin)

Compiled by MJB

## At home with Lauren, margarita and me

Still after that elusive No 1, Kirsty MacColl is the most dangerous of party animals: genius that drinks

She is sitting on the edge of the bath, wrapped in a fake leopardskin coat and squinting quizzically while smoking a cigarette. I am on my hands and knees, throwing up with all the force and natural beauty of Mount Vesuvius.

"Oh, you do remind me of myself when I was your age," Kirsty says, sniffing, then biting on her lower lip to keep from laughing. "Are you sure you're okay? I feel a bit guilty."

"No, I'm perfectly all right — it's just one of those sudden flu bugs brought on by margaritas."

"I try to say, but it comes out as a rather more, uh, solid indictment of my health. I stagger out of the toilet, trying to remember how to walk, and bump into her legs."

"You'll be wanting to wash your hair quite soon," she giggles, tamping out her cigarette and lighting up another one. "When you go to bed, don't lie on your back — you'll choke on your tongue. Thanks for a lovely night out."

she giggles again — "see you."

I blame it all on Talking Heads. In the sleeve notes to her just-released *Best Of* album, various luminaries pay tribute to Kirsty MacColl's ability to write classic pop songs, her Corybantic vocals and phrasing, her breasts (thank you, Morrissey) and, almost unanimously, her partying prowess. Chris Franz and Tiny Tim of Talking Heads wrote: "When you hear these songs of Kirsty's, you're going to want to hang out with her, too." And my fate was sealed. Genius that drinks! Doomed.

It's probably the very antithesis of rock 'n' roll, but a fairish old whack of what I laughingly refer to as "my career" is down to two teachers. Kirsty says, pouring out the first of too many margaritas. She ordered food before she sat down — "I know the menu by heart" — and stacked up two packets of Silk Cut and a lighter on the table, so the delay between wanting a cig-

arette and actually smoking it should not be more than six and a half seconds. "My English teacher gave free acoustic-guitar lessons after school; and my maths teacher did the same with the electric guitar. I was too poor to buy a guitar, so my English teacher lent me his, which I thought was very sweet, and above and beyond his job description."

She started writing songs when she was 14 and took a succession of scrag-end jobs in order to buy her own guitar. "Problem was, by the time I'd earned enough money to buy the one I wanted, the price had gone up again." A perfectly timed pause. "So that was when I went on the game."

Having written the sweetness and wonder of *They Don't Know* (as covered by Tracy Ullman) before she was 17, Kirsty signed to a record company that had such acute financial problems it could not afford to put her in a studio, so she started doing guest vocals on friends' records, just to keep her voice in shape — a trend that was to continue through her career. So far, The Pogues, The Wonder Stuff, The Kinks, The Smiths

and Happy Mondays have all benefited from the voice that swoops and loops-the-loop with itself like swallows trying to catch moths at dusk. *Fairytale of New York* — that was Kirsty. Days with Ray Davies — Kirsty was there. *Hallelujah* by Happy Mondays, the song that kicked off the whole Madchester scene in earnest — Kirsty's thumbprints are all over the record.

She has written songs with Johnny Marr of The Smiths, and the next single should be a languorous version of The Velvet Underground's *Perfect Day* on which she duets beautifully with The Lemonheads' Evan Dando, only "bastard Duran Duran have done a version for their album, so it probably won't be released until 2056. As a tribute to my untimely death".

So Kirsty, I ask, resting my chin on the empty margarita jug, because it is comfortable there and it might stop the terrifying attack of hiccups that has just beset me, why aren't you ridiculously famous? You are one of the most consistent classic pop-song writers of the 20th century, and you have a voice that Dolores from The Cranberries would kill for. Where is the Number One record? Free World from the 1989 LP *Kite*

should have topped the charts; Radio One should have given *Titanic Days* some of its playlist. Where is the Huge Hit?

"Oh," Kirsty pulls a face, and waves her hands. "Record companies often have a complete inability to get a record in the shop. It's all politics and incompetence. They've done all right by this record, though. Hopefully, by the time I get around to recording the next album, I'll be able to afford that 24-piece orchestra. I think I deserve it by now. Have you got any booze at your house? C'mon, let's go."

An hour later, after we have danced all round the house, I shove my acoustic guitar at her and demand she play all her greatest hits, now.

She does.

The Lauren Bacall of pop music, no less.

● The album, *Galore* — The Best of Kirsty MacColl, is out now on Virgin Records. *Kite*, on Virgin, and *Titanic Days*, on WEA, are also recommended. She tours Britain in May.



Kirsty MacColl: "It's all politics and incompetence"

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# Dorans Pride settles a score

Julian Muscat reports  
on a victory made all  
the sweeter by its being  
delayed for 12 months

IT WAS the perfect cure for a colossal hangover. After Haron's eclipse on Wednesday, the night of the dawned sorrow was quickly forgotten when Doran's Pride, representing Ireland, made off with the Bonusprint Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham yesterday.

There followed joyous scenes as Michael Hourigan, the winning trainer, milked the moment. He believed should have been his 12 months ago. Then, Doran's Pride capsize at the final flight when poised on Danoli's heels. Now, Hourigan held his breath as the very same obstacle stood between Doran's Pride and certain victory.

"Not many people believe we would have beaten Danoli," he said in welcoming his first Festival winner. "For so long I've thought how I'd love to re-run that race, but we'll show Danoli the way the next time we meet."

Hourigan's exuberance rubbed off on an impromptu gathering of his compatriots, who stormed the winner's enclosure. As the trainer sprayed champagne at an ever-swelling throng, many among the racecourse executive, which has tried to clamp down on such scenes, could not disguise their delight. This was the essence of Cheltenham.

Tom Doran, who owns the horse, was all but walking on air. "It's the greatest moment of my life," he said. "My father, Michael, is not too well and I hope this gives him the will to come here next year. The horse was brilliant but I nearly closed my eyes when he jumped the last." Unlike last year, this was not Doran's Pride before a fall.

In company with the punter who collected winnings of £120,000, Shane Broderick will now treasure this victory. It was Broderick's first ride as a professional and he could hardly have asked for a better start. Like Adrian Maguire, Hourigan plucked him from the Irish pony racing circuit. Also like Maguire, Broderick, 30, has a cool head on young shoulders.

Such was Doran's Pride authority over this competitive



Kissair has a Triumph Hurdle success in his sights after jumping the last in a clear lead yesterday

field that the party could have started long before the finish. One hopes the six-year-old will now graduate to fences, although connections are eager for another crack at Danoli. The showdown, and it would make compulsive viewing, may materialise at Aintree next month.

Earlier in the day, Kissair ran out an equally authoritative winner of the Triumph Hurdle to give Martin Pipe,

his trainer, a second victory in the race. This event holds fond memories for Pipe. In every year since Baron Blakeney opened his Cheltenham account in 1981, Pipe has attacked the race in numbers. "This was the first time I have had the one runner since Baron Blakeney's year," he said.

Pipe's stable jockey, Richard Dunwoody, lost out here as Terry Benson, who owns

Kissair, insisted Jonathan Lower maintain his successful association with the four-year-old. "I bought the horse at auction for 16,000 guineas, which was one bid more than I was prepared to make," Benson revealed.

Although Jamie Osborne remained winnerless with 18 of the 20 races completed, his mounts largely did themselves justice. Yet his frustration was evident in his effort aboard

Auburn Castle, who narrowly failed to overhaul Sound Revell in the Grand Annual Chase. He was handed a two-day ban for his use of the whip.

However, in the gathering gloom, he conjured the last ounce from Coulton to pass Sullivan River in the final stride of the Cathcart Chase. The smile on Osborne's face, after a clutch of near misses, was worth a thousand words.

## When parting with that fiver is very hard to do

Andrew Longmore battles with nerves and indecision before settling on his Gold Cup loser



8.00am: Wake up to visions of Jodami striding up the Cheltenham Hill for his second Gold Cup victory. Check whereabouts of The Times's fiver and rehearse swaggers to collect winnings. Vow to keep blinkers on for next 7½ hours to avoid mental anguish and fearful indecision. Jodami is the one, no question.

8.50am: Turn on television to catch BBC interview with Kim Bailey. He sounds confident about the chances of his Master Oats. Banish the thought that, if he can teach Alderbrook to win a Champion Hurdle in six weeks, taking a year or two to turn Master Oats from a plodder into a Gold Cup-winner should be a breeze. He doesn't want the ground to dry out. Silently pray for sunshine and high winds.

9.00am: Resort to Ted, Jim and Derek on Channel 4's Morning Line, knowing they will all tip something different. Ted Walsh has been the star all week with confident opinions, colourfully expressed in perfect Cheltenham Irish. He tips Jodami strongly, reckons he'll be suited by the long run from second last to last fence. Feel reassured, then remember his succinct dismissal of Alderbrook's chances in the Champion Hurdle: "Phew, he'll puncture up the hill."

9.30am: Open newspapers, promising not to take any notice of the opinions expressed therein. Master Oats figures strongly in the headlines, but note that Jodami has been backed heavily and that his trainer, Peter Beaumont, thinks he is as sharp as when he won his first Gold Cup two years ago. He should know. Eyes drawn to quote from Martin Pipe — "Minnehoma is very well and will be fresh..." — and John Edwards — "Monsieur Le Cure is better than he has ever been..." Shut news-

paper. Minnehoma? Pipe and Dunwoody have had an argument, but neither can be as good as The Fellow, and he only won it once. Monsieur Le Cure has had a dodgy season. Deep Bramble, Dubacilla, opinions, prejudice, half-truths. The barriers are down, any nonsense passes for wisdom.

2.15pm: Martin Pipe wins the opener. Could it be his day? The Irish banker wins the second.

3.00pm: Try to resume rational thought and dash to the pre-parade ring for clues. Eavesdrop on two Irishmen who like Deep Bramble. Then they like Flashing Steel, then Young Hustler. No help there. Every one of the runners looks fit to run for its life. Plunge into betting ring. Threes fives in sweaty palm, roulette wheel still turning. Minnehoma, Monsieur Le Cure, Deep Bramble. Jodami? No chance.

3.25pm: Decision time. It has to be Minnehoma. Why? No idea. Nice colours. Winning a Grand National before a Gold Cup would show style. Too late now anyway. Mr G. Liles of Leeds has my grubby note, knowing little of the angst invested with it, caring even less. 8-1.

3.30pm: Off. At steady cruising speed, Minnehoma can keep up. When they quicken down the back straight on the second circuit, he struggles. Master Oats gallops on relentlessly. Dunwoody is hard at work a mile out, but the National-winner stays on mightily to finish third. Another mile and... well, he beat Jodami. At least I got that right. Any ideas for the last?

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# Jackie the First Lady, a mystery to the last

**T**raditionally, in any tale of double-cross, politics, murder, love and money, it is pretty easy to spot the mastermind. You just see who is still standing at the end, holding the suitcase full of cash. Applying this narrative principle to the real-life biography of Jackie Onassis is a pleasant pastime, but one in which last night's *Secret Lives* (Channel 4) understandably did not indulge. Leaving the high-down conspiracy theories to Oliver Stone, *Secret Lives* just got as far as it could (not far) with a story notoriously fogged by reticence and cover-up. In other words, it was a brave idea, but doomed. Infiltrating the true story of the Kennedy family is a bit like trying to get Jeremy Beadle into a Corleone wedding.

What came across, in fact, was the same old icon — the curiously squished facial features, the firm chin, the hair like a permanent widow's veil. I had assumed that the film set out to demolish a myth, but she appears to have given the performance "live" on air, without rehearsal or preparation, immediately subsequent to an important state dinner. Her producer was still amazed at her performance. But she had been bred to it, you see. She had been bred to wear sunglasses in that particular way: to wear headscarves so that they didn't blow off. Those of us who stuck loyalty with *The Buccaneers* feel we know all about the New England class system. Kennedy was lucky to get her. So was Onassis.

**A**nalogies with royalty came along unprompted. "The nearest thing America ever had to a princess," said somebody, instantly making you feel sorry for her and worry about the availability of the staircase. Just like an old-fashioned princess, Jackie was adored for nothing more than her

new insights. Like BBC 2's superb *Reputations* (which included hubby Aristotle Onassis in the last series), *Secret Lives* seems not to care whether revisionism is attempted: if his material represents news to the viewer, that's good enough. I assume that the good insights were new lawyers acting for Onassis said the spent his money wildly in New York while banking her allowance (\$30,000 a month) against a rainy day. In effect, they said, she was defrauding him.

You wish they would come clean about the lines of inquiry that stumped them. Yes, it gets tiresome watching Nick Broomfield fruitlessly showing his microphone into the faces of people who won't talk, but with a story like Jackie's perhaps it's excusable. Last night's film included interviews with John Kennedy's secretary, and when she was asked how much Jackie knew about the President's adul-

teries, she threw back her head and laughed unstopably, like the wicked queen in *Snow White*.

**Y**ou don't have to be Oliver Stone to concoct wild conspiracy theories around such a foggy story as Jackie's. And in case anybody thinks paranoia is old hat, *The X-Files* (BBC 2) is currently training up a new generation to believe, first, "The Truth is Out There" but at the same time "Trust No One". With its confusing but plausible plots, quasi-scientific claptrap, beautiful male star, bippedy-boppedy theme music and plucky absence of peripherals, *The X-Files* has caught on in a very big way. Recently I received a promotional *X-Files* baseball cap in the post, but wearing it around Brighton shopping districts has elicited such an alarming degree of vocalised envy that I now go bare-headed even in the rain.

The series ended last night with Agent Mulder ("Fox" to his friends, if only he had any) discovering yet again that the conspiracies about aliens go deeper than he suspected. Honestly, for an FBI man, isn't he sweet? Down on Pandora Street (nice name), Mulder unlocked a storage container and found his considerable amazement gown naked men getting in softly-lit tanks, green gooey coursing through their veins instead of blood, rather like a Damien Hirst installation. What was going on here? Well, it was an experiment in DNA transplants, using bacteria found in recovered aliens — but of course, when Mulder returned next morning ("Wait till you see this!"), there was just an empty room. Damn. Still, it wasn't all bad news. At least that all-knowing "Deep Throat" character appears to be dead now, his last words being "Trust no one". Even in death that man was smug.

## REVIEW



Lynne Truss

taste in clothes; and above all, for keeping her mouth shut, by order of the family firm. When Marilyn Monroe sang "Happy Birthday, Mister President" at the White House, Jackie was tactfully elsewhere — in Virginia, riding horses. *Secret Lives* is a peculiar mish-mash — sometimes straight biography, sometimes including dramatications, and irritatingly cautious about making claims for

## CHOICE



Natasha begs on Moscow streets (BBC2, 9.30pm)

**Russian Wonderland** BBC2, 9.30pm  
Stories of daily life in Boris Yeltsin's Russia are transmitted with a directness and intimacy made possible by lightweight camcorders. Natasha is a perky and appealing six-year-old who supports her family by going begging on the streets of Moscow. Her main targets are motorists stuck in traffic jams. Few resist her beguiling charm. Natasha, her mother and brother are refugees from Ukraine. Disqualified from state benefits, they share a hotel room with another family. Their dream of their own home seems far away. Another film features Julia, a 28-year-old mother of two who killed her violent husband with a kitchen knife. She is shown trying to pick up the threads after an early release from prison.

**The Champions** BBC2, 6.25pm  
The latest BBC raid on Lord Grade's archives comes up with this daffily enjoyable series from 1968 about a trio of troubleshooters endowed with telepathic powers. They can also see and hear about 100 times better than the rest of us. We soon learn that a low-budget version of Tibet where they are stealing a deadly virus from the villainous Chinese. Several frames of unconvincing model work later, our heroes are downed in a plane crash. The dialogue can hardly cope. "Nobody knows whether we're gonna make it, Sharon," gins Craig Stirling (Stuart Damon), "but one thing's for sure, we're gonna find out." Alexandra Bastedo plays Sharon Macready and William Gaunt, as Richard Barrett, completes the threesome.

**The Night of Comic Relief** BBC1, from 1.00pm  
Torvill and Dean become Torvill and Mr Bean as Rowan Atkinson takes to the ice for Red Nose Day. Look out, too, for Archbishop Desmond Tutu playing a sheep in a celebrity rendition of *Old MacDonald's Farm*. The Comic Relief evening is a bit like a party where everybody is expected to do a turn and nobody worries if the singing is dreadful and the jokes fall flat. As usual the star turns are interspersed with reports from the front line, with Richard Wilson visiting Uganda, Billy Connolly in Mozambique and Victoria Beckham in Zimbabwe. The centenary studio reserved for later when Jo Brand, Julian Clary and Ben Elton celebrate St Patrick's Night in Belfast.

**Missing** ITV, 9.00pm  
Fiona Fothergill and Alastair Stewart reopen the missing persons file, providing peak-time entertainment for the television millions and, perhaps, effecting the odd tearful reunion. The justification for exposing private grief in this way is that ends can justify means. The Green family, at least, would agree. We hear the story of 25-year-old Paul, who disappeared in May last year but turned up after an appeal on a previous programme. The mother of Stephen Holmes must be hoping for a similar miracle. Stephen vanished in December 1978 when he was 16, but his mum has not given up her search. The other item is about the growing number of middle-aged men who abandon their homes and families.

Peter Waymark

## CARLTON/LWT

- 6.00am GMTV (7538253)
- 9.25 Chain Letters (s) (3974185)
- 9.55 London Today (Teletext) and weather (8578456)
- 10.00 The Time...the Place. With John Stapleton (s) (763036)
- 10.35 This Morning. (2626307) 12.20pm London Today (Teletext) and weather (1320340)
- 12.30 News (Teletext) and weather (2809123)
- 12.55 Coronation Street (t). (Teletext) (2848414) 1.25 Home and Away (Teletext) (5776163)
- 1.55 The Chrystal Rose Show. Farm debates with a studio audience (s) (35661123)
- 2.25 A Country Practice. Kats meets a mysterious young woman (s) (74438104)
- 2.50 High Road (7556678) 3.20 ITN News headlines (Teletext) (675017) 3.25 London Today (Teletext) and weather (8784368)
- 3.30 Rosie and Jim (s) (2840659) 3.45 Warner Brothers Cartoons (2838814) 4.00 Zzzap! (t) (s) (8871727) 4.15 Tiny Toon Adventures (6198814)
- 4.40 The Geeks. With guests East 17 and Gladiators. Hunter and Lightning. (Teletext) (s) (8723801)
- 5.10 After 5 with Carol Keating (Teletext) (6954630)
- 5.40 News (Teletext) and weather (384475)
- 6.00 Home and Away (t). (Teletext) (813272)
- 6.25 London Tonight (Teletext) (538920)
- 7.00 Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right. Game show where prizes can be won or lost on the turn of a card. (Teletext) (s) (5098)
- 7.30 Coronation Street. Steve plays a dangerous game. (Teletext) (291)
- 8.00 The Bill: Alone. Deak makes an error in judgment which results in a hostage situation. (Teletext) (4748)
- 8.30 The Upper Hand. Two romantic comedy starring Joe McGraw, Dana Weston and Home and Away's Charlie almost brings the house down (Teletext) (s) (3253)
- 9.00 **MISSING** (8007)
- 10.00 News at Ten (Teletext) and weather (77611)
- 10.10 **MISSING** (8007) starring Donald Sutherland as a small-town private investigator who becomes obsessed with an abused and neurotic prostitute (Jane Fonda). Directed by Alan J. Pakula (4314752)
- 12.35am London Tonight (Teletext) (5829789)
- 12.45 Get Wet (405912)
- 1.05 The James Whale Show. Late-night entertainment (s) (850963)
- 2.05 The Chart Show (s) (8887760)
- 3.00 Nasty Mothers. Rock and heavy metal music magazine (s) (304012)
- 3.55 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema (s) (8867296)
- 4.30 The New Music featuring Treble Charger and Vanessa Williams (51944)
- 5.30 ITN Morning News (14296) Ends at 6.00

## SATELLITE

- Neighbours (8533368) 8.00 Sons and Daughters (2858291) 8.30 EastEnders (2957562) 9.00 The Bill (294814) 9.30 All About (48747) 10.00 The X-Files (287418) 11.00-12.00 The X-Files (287418)
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## SPORT

FRIDAY MARCH 17 1995

'Arrogant' England start as clear favourites to dash Scotland's hopes

Carling looks  
beyond drive  
for grand slam

By DAVID HANDS RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND, short-price favourites at 2-1 to win rugby union's five nations' championship and grand slam against Scotland at Twickenham tomorrow, wound down their preparations yesterday with a declaration of intent by Will Carling, their captain.

"I believe that if we fulfil our potential we will win the game," Carling said. "We have to be big enough to accept the mantle of favouritism but we also need to win for the sake of this team and for what is still to come in the World Cup in South Africa."

Without holding any hostages to fortune — Craig Chalmers, the Scotland stand-off half, was already referring at Edinburgh Airport to English arrogance — Carling expressed his confidence in a team which has won all five of its internationals this season. But he welcomed the build-up against the championship's other unbeaten team as replacing the intense interest sure to greet England when they establish themselves in Durban for the World Cup in May.

"We have reacted very well so far but I believe this team is capable of more," Carling said. He denied that the events of 1990, when both countries went unbeaten into the final championship round at Murrayfield and Scotland won, had acted as a reference point this week, though it is hard to imagine that so climactic a match has not played

its part in the preparations of both teams.

Scotland, whose price is 7-2, were amused to find the captain of their flight south was one David Carling — not known to be a relation. Gavin Hastings, their captain, was invited by an American journalist with a limited knowledge of rugby to describe Saturday's occasion: "It's like the Super Bowl," Hastings replied, "only bigger."

Emphasising the commercial arena into which rugby is

whether Graham Dawe, their replacement hooker, will be fit. Dawe strained a calf muscle on Wednesday and did not train yesterday; with the A team in South Africa preparing to play Natal tomorrow, Greg Botterman, the Saracens hooker, has been added to the squad as cover.

Dawe is optimistic but it is an exciting moment for Botterman, 27, whose representative honours do not extend beyond divisional level.

England A, whose game in Durban will help to finalise places in the World Cup squad, lost their captain when Steve Bates was advised not to play because of a long-standing knee injury which has flared up. Bates, the Wasps scrum half, has led the A team to an unbeaten season against Ireland, France and Italy. His place goes to Matthew Dawson, of Northampton.

Andy Gomarsall, deputy to Bates at Wasps, flew to Durban last night to join the match replacements and will train with the side this morning. Gomarsall has played for England Emerging Players and England Students this season but, fortunately, was rested from the student international with Italy at Leicester tonight so that the selectors could watch Simon Johnson, of Bath University.

Johnson is one of four changes from the victory against Wales in yet another England representative team unbeaten this season. Martin Corry and Darren Molloy return to the pack and Peter Scrivenor, a student at Brunel University who has impressed with Wasps this season, comes in at No 8 for the injured Eben Rollitt.

Clayton Thomas, a teacher from Britton Ferry, near Neath, and a newcomer to Wales's international panel this season, is one of his country's two appointments for the World Cup. He joins Derek Bevan, the most experienced international referee in world rugby, who handled the 1991 final.

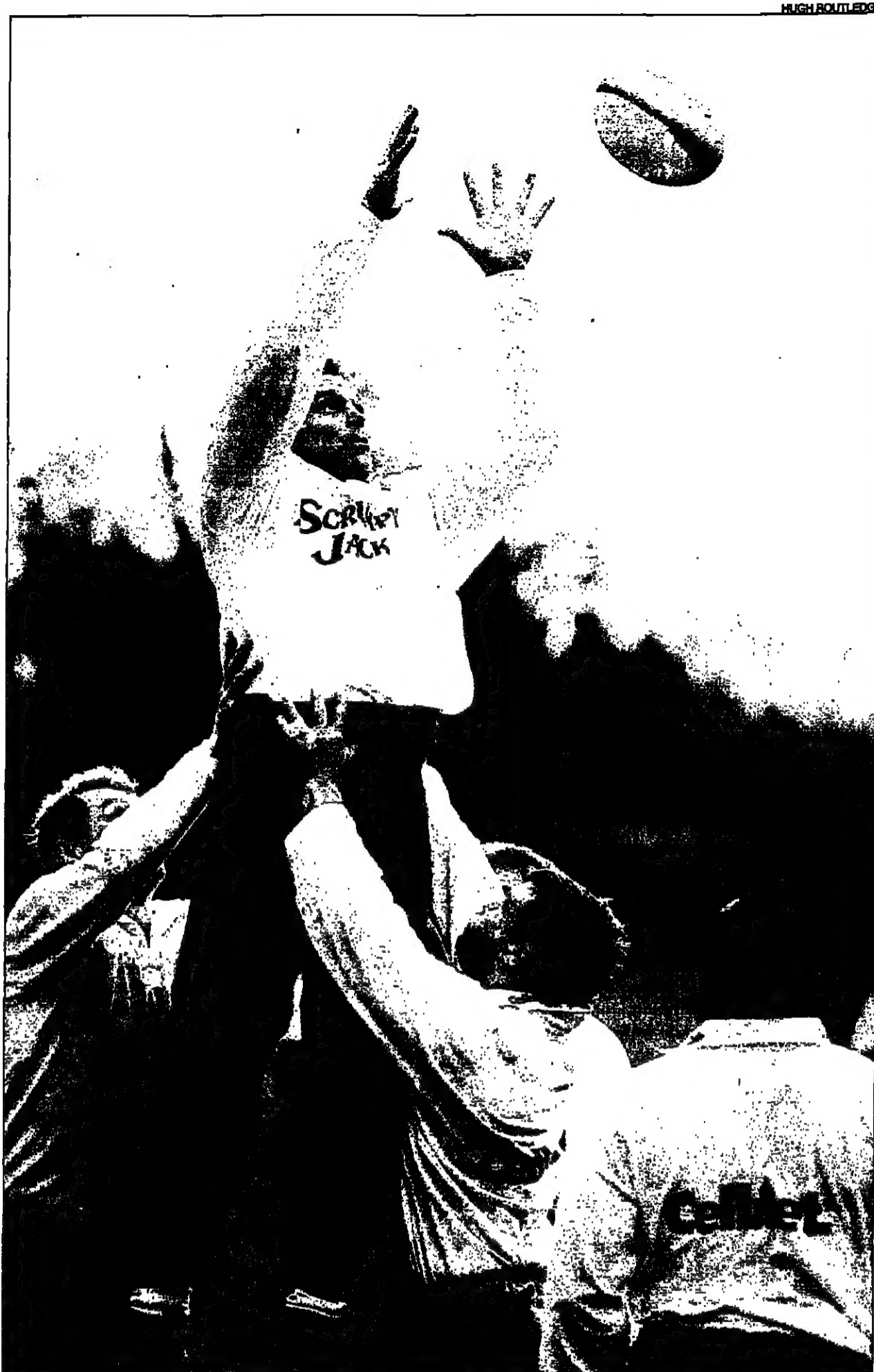
## FIVE NATIONS



Gerald Davies on the lock holding Welsh key — 35

also moving. Iain McLauchlan, the Scottish squad's business adviser, said that Kenny Logan and Peter Wright had turned down substantial appearance fees so that they could concentrate upon the match tomorrow. This area impinges increasingly upon the England players, and whichever side wins the grand slam will find greatly enhanced commercial opportunities.

The Scots have cleared up doubts surrounding a back injury to Iain Morrison, the London Scottish flanker, and Craig Joiner, the Melrose wing, has recovered from a cold, but England will wait until today before deciding



Rodber gets in some lineout practice, with a little help from his friends at an England training session

FA allows  
released  
players to  
return  
to actionBy RUSSELL KEMPSON  
AND PETER BALL

INNOCENT until proven guilty: that is the basis for British justice and it allows Bruce Grobbelaar, Hans Segers and John Fashanu to compete, if able, in the FA Carling Premiership tomorrow. Though they have been linked to allegations of match-fixing and were released from police custody, without charge, only on Wednesday, they are free to pursue their trade.

The Football Association has cleared the path for resumption of duties. "It is up to the clubs concerned to decide whether they should be selected," Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, said.

In the recent case of Chris Armstrong, the Crystal Palace forward, the FA reacted in similar fashion. Armstrong tested positive for cannabis in a sample taken at the club's training ground in Mitcham, Surrey, in January. He was counselled, tested further, with negative results, and told to sit out four matches before being allowed back into circulation in the 2-1 victory over Sheffield Wednesday on Tuesday, in which he scored Palace's first goal.

Grobbelaar, Segers and Fashanu have received equally sympathetic treatment from the sport's governing body. No charges, no trial — no suspension. Play on until proven otherwise. A sound, sane verdict, for the moment, amid the most contentious and delicate football issue in decades.

Fashanu, the Aston Villa forward, will not play against West Ham United tomorrow. Injury is likely to keep him out for the rest of the season. Segers, the Wimbledon goalkeeper, may miss the home game with Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park. Joe Kinsey, the Wimbledon manager, is keen to give Neil Sullivan, the club's second-choice custodian, his chance. However, Grobbelaar, the Southampton goalkeeper, is a likely starter in the Premiership match at Nottingham Forest.

Jeff Kenna, the Irish defender, yesterday followed in the footsteps of Alan Shearer and Tim Flowers and moved from Southampton to Blackburn Rovers. Blackburn paid £1.5 million for the full back.

European delight, page 35

## Swing drives Faldo to distraction

FROM MEL WEBB IN ORLANDO

A 42-YEAR-OLD driver was both friend and enemy for Nick Faldo as he produced a round of 71, one under par, in the first round of the Nestlé Invitational golf tournament at Bay Hill here yesterday.

The persimmon-headed MacGregor club was given to Faldo two years ago by Mike Hulbert, a US Tour player. It served him well on the front nine, where he hit the ball consistently straight. He got a birdie on the 1st with a single putt after a driver and a six-iron had left him 15 feet from the pin.

After the turn, Faldo was frustrated by a straight push right that suddenly crept into his swing. He three-putted the 14th for his only bogey, but picked up his second birdie with a two-iron to ten feet at the 17th. "The club suits my angle of attack, but I don't understand where this push has come from," he said. "I felt I was swinging the club well all the way round, but for some reason the ball kept heading right on the back

nine. Practice ground here I come."

Colin Montgomerie's cup was overflowing when he played the first eight holes in three under par, but he went thirty over the last ten, dropping four shots to finish the day on 73, one over par.

The burly Scot, a perfectionist if ever there was one, is not the sort of man to go easy on himself when things have gone wrong, and he was throwing the dummy out of his cot with some energy when it was all over. "Three under after eight, and finished one over," he said. "Absolutely pathetic." Interview over, he stumped off looking as though seeking a dog to kick.

Montgomerie hit a sand-wedge to eight feet and sank the putt for a birdie on the 6th, picked up another shot on the 13th, when he went into the lake that protects the front of the green.

He looked to be at least one club short on the 364-yard 15th, the ball pulling up 60 feet short on the huge green. Three putts later he had registered his third bogey, and his misery was complete when he failed to get up and down from a greenside bunker on the 17th.

Severiano Ballesteros missed too many fairways for comfort in his 75, the same score as José María Olazábal. Ian Woosnam, playing his second tournament of the season after finishing joint second with Faldo at the Honda Classic last week, was one under after ten holes. Sandy Lyle's dismal form continued — he was three over par after ten.

## Britons disqualified

THREE Britons were disqualified on the first day of the Portuguese Open at Penha Longa yesterday. Gordon J. Brand and Sam Torrance signed wrong scores, and Steve Richardson missed his tee-off time after returning to his hotel when play was suspended because of high winds.

Torrance signed for a five at the 10th when he had taken four, then a par four at the 14th when he had bogeyed. "I

just didn't check my card," he said. Brand's round of 84 was the worst of the day even before he failed to add a penalty at the final hole.

Richardson had still to tee-off when play was halted by 40mph winds, but he did not realise that the action had been restarted a few hours later and so failed to make the first tee in time. "You would have to say it was stupid and my own fault," he said.

## Brawl brings Deveau two-year ban

By NICHOLAS HARLING

BASKETBALL authorities have responded to the brawl at Derby a fortnight ago by handing out the heaviest punishments in the history of the British game. DeCarlo Deveau, 22, the 6ft 5in Bahamian, who was found to be guilty of instigating the mêlée which caused a 22-minute hold-up in the Budweiser League fixture involving his team, the Leopards, has been banned from playing in England for two years.

Deveau, who played his first game for the London club — whose joint owner is the impresario, Harvey Goldsmith — five weeks ago, will have to pursue his career closer to his Florida base if he is not

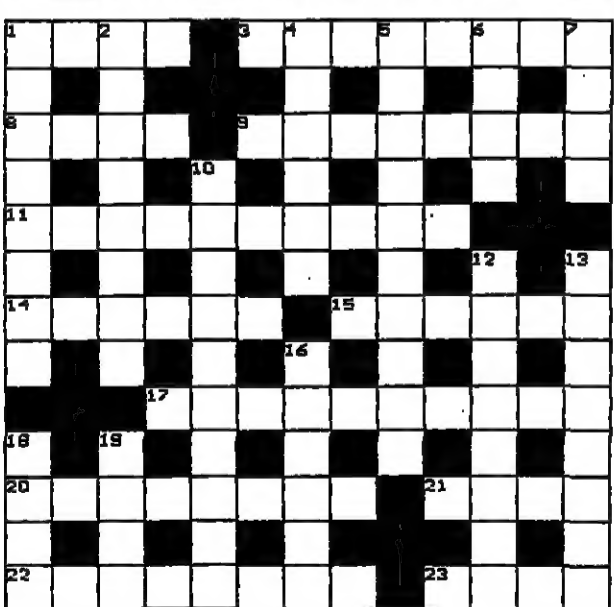
banned worldwide by the governing body, Fiba. With the sport's family image at stake, a joint disciplinary commission assembled by the Basketball League and the English Basketball Association decided that it had no alternative but to effectively end Deveau's career in England after studying videos presented by both clubs of his "violent conduct" five minutes from the end of the game at the Moorways Centre. He appeared to head-butt and punch one Derby Bucks player, Andy Gardiner, before chasing another, Tim Lascelles, with a wooden post, striking him on the arm.

"I feel very sorry for DeCarlo," Ed Simons, the Leopards joint owner, said yesterday. "He's a lovely kid. What he

did was completely out of character. He's never been in any kind of trouble before."

The Leopards, who have been warned about their future behaviour after an incident involving their captain, Karl Brown, last year, have appealed against the decision to punish their coach, Billy Mims, with 15 disciplinary points, which could rule him out for two games. The commission felt that Mims had "failed to exercise sufficient control of his own players after an earlier warning."

Two Derby players, Lascelles and Jason Siemon, have also been banned for "violent conduct". Siemon will miss three games but Derby will consider appealing against the severity of Lascelles's ten-game suspension.

TIMES TWO  
CROSSWORD

No 422

## ACROSS

- 1 Mournful cry; amusing person (4)
- 3 Rodent; hoarder (8)
- 8 Sediment of drink (4)
- 9 Drag (miscreant) under boat (8)
- 11 Improbable (3-7)
- 14 Estimation (of worth) (6)
- 15 Lear's toothless creature (6)
- 17 Analysed; out of order (6-4)
- 20 Ferdinand's queen; dull yellow colour (8)
- 21 Melt (together); electrical safeguard (4)
- 22 Ruins, tears down (8)
- 23 Low dam (4)

## DOWN

- 1 Torment of damned; rakish club (4-4)
- 2 Fast its best (fruit) (8)
- 4 Douse, slake (6)
- 5 I'm sure that's right (3,2,5)
- 6 Way, course (4)
- 7 Bouncy rhythm; pleasant accent (4)
- 10 Days of yore (10)
- 12 Unqualified (8)
- 13 Antlered Arctic beast (8)
- 16 Thin gruel (6)
- 18 Outside of cheese (4)
- 19 (Clawed) feet (4)

## SOLUTION TO NO 421

ACROSS: 1 T-shirt 4 Tont 9 Acid 10 Haywire 11 Elusive 12 Breve 13 Perambulate 17 Odium 19 Jollity 22 Jackdaw 23 Crete 24 Mask 25 Slated

DOWN: 1 Tease 2 Hirsute 3 Radii 5 Opine 6 Teeter 7 Cheek by jowl 8 Cymbal 14 Armada 15 Trisect 16 Boojum 18 Incus 20 Local 21 Yield

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Votes against  
China leaders

At the National People's Congress in Peking a record high number of delegates — the normally compliant parliament — voted against government's choice of vice premier for appointment.

Some foreign observers saw this as a sign that the Chinese leadership, despite the party propaganda of a "core" of the hardliners, was beginning to fracture.

Chinese leadership fractures Mao and Mr Deng, Peking

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